

THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE  
TEACHING OF ST. PAUL

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by

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## PREFACE

This subject for a thesis was suggested by Dr. Harry Miller when he was a member of the faculty of New College. I shall always be grateful to him for it has been intensely interesting, absorbing and practical from a pastor's point of view. One who is in the ministry to-day feels the tension, complexity and uncertainty of our times. There are strange forces at work in the world and at times the very existence of Christianity is threatened. After this helpful study the writer is more firmly convinced than ever that Christianity is the only hope of the world. St. Paul put the principles of Jesus into action in his day and has demonstrated their validity for our age.

There is no place in this study for a discussion of the authenticity of Paul's writings. This would require space equal to the amount allotted to this thesis. The Pastoral Epistles have not been included in this study. Acts, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, and Philemon are the sources which have been used.

Furthermore, it should not be necessary to apologise for the frequent citation of scripture

passages for after all, the writings themselves are far more important than what others have said about them.

The reader will notice that the American Revised Version has been used in the scripture quotations except when the Moffatt's translation has been used, and this has been carefully noted. This will account for the occasional differences in spelling in some of the words. The writer has tried to adhere to the English form of spelling as given in Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary. If the American form of spelling appears, it is because of a deeply entrenched habit. Of course, when American authors have been quoted, the citations have been left intact and no change has been made in the spelling of words.

Perhaps just a word is necessary concerning the bibliography. It is not exhaustive. Only the books which have been consulted in the preparation of this thesis have been listed. For example, no attempt has been made to list all the commentaries on the Pauline epistles, only those which have been consulted.

I want to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Hunter and his library assistants for their many kindnesses. I am grateful to the various members of

the New College and Divinity School faculty for their fellowship and the inspiration of their classes. I am indebted to my counsellors, Rev. Professor Curtis and Rev. Professor Manson for their valuable suggestions.

I want to thank Miss Julia Henninger for her help in reading the proof and my wife for the administrative duties which she assumed in connection with my church while I was away on a leave of absence.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

"The life and nature of one who has influenced human history so profoundly as St. Paul must be studied afresh by every successive age. His character is far too wide and all embracing to be comprehended by the age in which he lives and on which he exercised his immediate influence. He has caught in some degree, the eternal principle which sweeps through all time.... thus he transcends the limits of time and speaks to all ages; and his words will be differently understood in different ages, for every age finds that they respond to its peculiar questions. Hence every age must write afresh for itself -- one might say, every man must write for himself -- the life of St. Paul."<sup>1</sup>

Even though there have been many books<sup>2</sup> written on the life of St. Paul, as Sir William Ramsay has already expressed above, one feels justified in exploring

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1. Sir William Ramsay, Pauline and Other Studies, p 27f.
  2. Professor Peabody in his The Apostle Paul and the Modern World, says that, "The library of the Theological School of Harvard University contains more than two thousand volumes dealing with the life and letters of the Apostle Paul, or more than one for each year since his time, not to speak of the multitudinous commentaries and histories in which the teaching of Paul has an important place."

again the writings of this remarkable man who stands next to Jesus as the Founder of Christianity. Men and movements, past and present, are being studied to-day as never before to see how the Kingdom of God can be advanced. Studies are being made to see how men of other eras faced and solved their social problems. However, in the search for light on the complicated problems of our time, do we ever turn back to the Apostle Paul, the first great Christian leader, teacher and preacher, to see how he faced the issues of his day? We usually think of Paul as a theologian; most of the books on him, in fact, have been written to explain his theology. Was he not also a practical student of social conditions? Was not Paul concerned more with propagating a cause than a tradition; with appropriating Christ rather than defining a Christology; with the upbuilding of a body of Christ rather than the organization of a Church? Even the sections of his teaching which are definitely theological have their social and practical content. For example, from his doctrine of justification, he infers, "ye were slaves of sin, but being freed from it, ye have become slaves of righteousness." (Rom. 6:18). In the midst of his eschatological teaching one sees social implications. "Keep a check on loafers," "never

lose your temper with any one," "never give up prayer, never grow tired with doing what is right." Professor Edward Caird in his Evolution of Religion says,<sup>3</sup> "It would be truer to say that the ethical principle in Paul begat the theological than that the theological begat the ethical."

It must be stated in the very beginning that the writer has tried, so far as is humanly possible, to approach this particular study without any preconceived ideas or conclusions. The very title of this thesis suggest certain limitations. The present need and method have been aptly stated by Foakes-Jackson in his book, The Life of St. Paul.

"What is needed to restore Paul to his right place in Christian thought is a historical study of his work and writings, viewing both in the light of circumstances of the age. His students are faced with the difficult task of endeavouring to go back to the first century, and to discover under what circumstances he opposed the Judaism of the time. They have to realize the nature of his great struggle with the Judaic Christianity in the first days of the Church. They have to place themselves in the position of the Apostle in such a community as the earliest Corinthian Church, to estimate the profound wisdom and large-hearted love with which he faced the problems. They have to try to discover what was the mutual mentality of his Galatian converts and his Roman correspondents, and to judge why his arguments are peculiarly

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3. Caird, The Evolution of Religion, Vol. II, p 202.

applicable to their, if not to our generation.

"And by doing this, it will become constantly more plain that St. Paul is a man for all time, because he was essentially the man of his own; that what he accomplished was permanent for the reason that he had no eye for posterity, but did the work before him for the sake of those with whom he came into contact. And the more this is realized, the more value Paul will be to our generation. It will become clear that under changing circumstances these are always the same basic principles: that the service of Christ may vary in its form, but will remain the same in essence. And when Paul is approached by this method his spirit will be better understood, and he will not be blamed for the mistakes of others, nor reproached with not having interested himself in what is of interest to us, but did not apply to the circumstances of his day. He will then be recognized as laying down and acting upon principles applicable to all conditions of life. Paul is probably the truest Christian the Church has produced and his life and writings justify what he said of himself: 'But we have the mind of Christ.'"

Let it be said here and now that the word social has been deliberately chosen rather than ethical or moral because, in the opinion of the writer, it is a more inclusive word. In ethics it is almost impossible to draw the line between that which is personal and that which is social. And ethical and moral society demands moral and ethical qualities of those who compose it. "No man lives unto himself and no man dies unto himself." The true type of individual is not the Robinson Crusoe of Defoe's story. Paul wanted to present every individual in the fulness of the stature

of the measure of Christ, but that ideal did not imply an individual divorced from society at large. Therefore our use of the word social<sup>4</sup> includes the moral, the ethical, and all the practical aspects of his teaching.

It is surprising to find how little attention has been paid to this part of his teaching in the many volumes which have been written discussing the various phases of his life and thought. Matthew Arnold remarked once that the controversy on justification by faith had flooded the world with an ocean of verbiage. The *gap's* and the *se's* have been painstakingly studied in the effort to determine their significance for Paul's theological dictums.

To ignore the social and ethical aspects of Paul's teaching is to misunderstand him completely. Percy Gardner says in this connection, "It is by no means the purpose of Paul even in the Roman Epistle, to set forth a creed or a scheme of belief. In that Epistle he is mainly bent upon what is ethical, what has relation

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4. Cf. Zenos, The Plastic Age of the Gospel, p 93.  
 Cf. Brace, Social Aspects of Christian  
Morality, p 6-7.  
 Cf. Garvie, The Christian Ideal for Modern  
Society, p 37.

to conduct, and to human love and hope. He drifts into a doctrinal discussion, I had almost said a doctrinal slough, because it lies directly in his path. But he is not happy there, nor do I think that he there shows at his best. And it is with obvious relief that he goes back to his ethical exhortation."<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to understand why so many of the writers have underestimated the emphasis which Paul did lay on the ethical, practical, and thus the social aspects of the Christian life. It is all the more necessary that we give careful attention to the important places righteous conduct has in his thought. God is righteous;<sup>6</sup> His Kingdom is righteousness;<sup>7</sup> Christians are to walk worthy of their calling.<sup>8</sup> Therefore righteousness and goodness are necessary characteristics of the Christian life.<sup>9</sup> Cadoux reasons thus: "Paul speculates boldly on the source and nature of Christian righteousness, taking at times a forensic view of it, almost equating it with that forgiveness

5. Gardner, The Religious Experience of St. Paul, p 139.

6. II Cor. 9:9; Rom. 1:17.

7. Rom. 14:17.

8. I Thess. 2:12.

9. Gal. 5:22; II Cor. 6:14-20; Rom. 6:18, 8:10, 15:14.

Cf. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World, p 79.



of sin and acquittal before God which is the outcome, not of any merit on man's part, but of his faith in God through Jesus Christ, and insisting that this faith is the one true spring of right action.<sup>10</sup> But however his theories on the subject are to be explained, there can be no question as to the intensely practical nature of the righteousness he had in mind. Though he lays great stress on the part played by Divine grace in the production of human goodness<sup>11</sup> and the inability of man to attain to righteousness by his own unaided strength,<sup>12</sup> yet he feels none the less the need of inculcating righteous conduct by frequent and direct exhortation, as well as by the denunciation of evil.<sup>13</sup> His doctrine of justification by faith did not prevent him from believing and declaring that judgment will be passed on men by God according to the merit or demerit of their actions."<sup>14</sup>

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- 10. I Cor. 1:30, II Cor. 3:9, 5:21, Rom. 4:3, 13, 22-25, 5:17-21, 9:30-32; 10:5-10, Phil. 3:9.
  - 11. Gal. 5:4f., II Thess. 1:11, 2:17, Rom. 16:20, Phil. 1:6, 11, Eph. 2:10.
  - 12. Rom. 3:10, 7:5, 7-25.
  - 13. Gal. 6:9f., I Thess. 2:12, 4:1, 5:22, II Thess. 3:13, I Cor. 15:34. Rom. 6:12-14, 12:9ff., 13:12-14, 16:10, Phil. 2:15, Col. 1:10, 2:6f., Eph. 4:1f., 22-32, 5:8-11, 6:14f.
  - 14. Cadoux, Op. Cit., p 79. Gal. 6:7f., II Cor. 5:10, Rom. 2:6-13, 16. (Moffatt's Translation).

"Be ye imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you,"<sup>15</sup> is another typical example of Paul's teaching which reveals social aspects. For Paul, fellowship with God implied fellowship with man at every point of contact. "As we have occasion, let us work that which is good towards all men."<sup>16</sup> Some one has remarked that when Paul said that we are to walk by faith, he implies that faith is a way of walking, not of talking.

Many writers<sup>17</sup> do recognize the social and ethical factors in Paul's teaching but most of the scholars devote their energy and talent to other problems and lines of thought. We may consider it a

15. Eth. 5:1f.

16. Gal. 6:10a.

17. James Stewart, A Man in Christ, the Vital Elements in St. Paul's Religion, "Paul's Gospel remained moral to the core" p 77f. Weizsäcker, Apostolic Age, "Christianity is preeminently an ethical religion. This means not only that the God it believes in is a moral being, but also that the worship rendered to Him lies in the sphere of the moral life, that accordingly it is above all a matter of the disposition, nay, that it lays claim to the whole man and all his actions," p 338 Vol. 2. Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Church. In this two volume work, he massively stresses the central truth, that the social ethic of Christianity issues out of the Christian religion.

commonplace to-day, that religion must express itself in life, and that morality is the test and measure of belief; yet we shall see when we consider the social world of Paul that it was practically a novel idea. For Paul at least, religious belief must never be divorced from life. Every faculty of man as well as every detail of conduct must be acceptable to God.<sup>18</sup>

"It was his constant effort, and effort to which every epistle bears witness, by a variety of precept and wealth of illustration drawn from the institutions and activities of his times, to enforce the truth that faith does not consist in intellectual opinion or outward ceremony, but in the actual service and living devotion of the whole man to God."<sup>19</sup>

Two thousand years of Christian history gives us a good perspective from which to see the social implications of our Christian faith. The Christian church as we know it to-day could never have survived if it had not met the social needs of its age, developed unusual attitudes, cherished the highest ideals, and devised certain forms of control.<sup>20</sup>

In this connection it is interesting to note the impression which some of the early Christians

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18. Rom. 12:1

19. Alexander, The Ethics of St. Paul, p 16.

20. Cf. Case, The Social Origins of Christianity, p 76ff.

made on the pagan world.<sup>21</sup>

"For the distinction between Christians and other men, is neither in country nor language nor customs. For they do not dwell in cities in some place of their own, nor they use any strange variety of dialect, nor practise an extraordinary kind of life.....yet while living in Greek and barbarian cities, according as each obtained his lot, and following the local customs, both in clothing and food and in the rest of life, they show forth the wonderful and confessedly strange character of the constitution of their own citizenship.....Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is a foreign country. They marry as all men, they bear children, but they do not expose their offspring. They offer free hospitality, but guard their purity. Their lot is cast 'in the flesh,' but they do not live 'after the flesh.' They pass their time upon the earth, but they have their citizenship in heaven. They obey the appointed laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives.....To put it shortly what the soul is in the body, that the Christians are in the world."<sup>22</sup>

The above quotation applies to a later period than Paul's; yet the implications must have been in his teaching or else we should never have known such amazing results. As we proceed with this study, trying to view it objectively from the scientific and historical point of view, we shall see more fully the important place of Paul's social teaching and the implications for the Christian church to-day.

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21. Cf. Glover, Conflict of Religion in the Early Roman Empire, p 159.

22. Epistle to Diognetus 5-6.

It should be stated in the beginning that Paul does not set forth a social system or promulgate a certain type of social order. Although he gives numberless ethical commands and words of advice, and although nearly all of his teaching arises out of certain specific social situations, in no sense can we say that Paul is setting forth a complete ethical or social system. Even though his teaching may be in harmony with the principles of modern sociology, as Chadwick maintains in his book on The Social Teaching of St. Paul, yet he is not promulgating a social theory or promoting a social movement in any sense of the word as we understand it to-day. This may be the reason why so many writers pass quickly over any social factors in his teaching.

It is not the purpose of this writer to try to evolve a political or social program as a result of this study but from a merely objective point of view we see at once that St. Paul never remains silent about moral evils. He took a deep interest in applying the law of love to all dealings with his fellowmen. He would have nothing to do with a religion that does not affect social life and raise it to a plane which shall be acceptable to his Lord and Master. "Yet he

makes no scientific classification of virtues such as the Stoic and pagan moralists of his day, he promulgates no code, he discusses no summum bonum."<sup>23</sup>

Even though his teaching may be considered by some as primarily individualistic, it does not stop there. Men and women are not detached units, but members of the human race. They belong to small or large units, to the church, to a family, to a community, to a state. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."<sup>24</sup> When one member suffers, all suffer. One blood runs through the whole and no one individual can reach his highest without correlating his activity with the others.

In the light of this can the Church or the individual Christian pass all moral evils by and say that our faith has no social implications or application? Can we pass by on the other side as the priest did the man who had fallen among the thieves and do nothing about evil forces which are threatening the very life

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23. Stewart, A Man in Christ, p 27f.  
Deissmann, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of St. Paul, p 257ff.

24. Rom. 12:4-5, Eph. 4:25b.

of our civilisation? Would Paul look on calmly and see the poor trodden under foot? Would Paul say nothing about social forces which would jeopardise his faith and eventually destroy the Church? Is it possible that such a study as this is in vain? Because Paul did not become a Social Reformer, in our sense of the word, and strike out openly against certain social evils of his time, was he not interested in social problems? Did he offer no teaching of any practical value? Did Paul overlook social problems, or have those who studied him failed to see the social implications of his teaching and passed them by? Would not the teaching of Paul, who had such a vivid experience of the Christ, have something permanent to offer to those who follow in His train? Foakes-Jackson in his Studies of Early Christianity says, "His whole work and example could hardly have been better if he had foreseen the history of the last 1800 years."

It should be stated here also that in the light of this study it was found to be a mistake to try and divorce what we might call the distinctly religious and theological from the moral, ethical and social. In the final analysis they are one. For purposes of intellectual discussion, they might be separated,

although Deissmann says, "I am afraid the people of Iconium, Thessalonica, Corinth would all have been overtaken by the fate of Eutyches of Troas (Acts 20:9) if they had been obliged to listen to the Christological, hamartiological, and eschatological paragraphs of modern Paulinism."<sup>25</sup> For Paul everything must be settled in relation to Jesus. As we shall observe later, religion and morality, faith and morals stand together.

Barry<sup>26</sup> suggests in this connection that we are brought to the very creative genius of Christianity. It is otherworldly, essentially religious, and yet from the very beginning and especially in the apostolic age, it was a redemptive antiseptic, a leaven, a light, salt which saves from decay, a vital transforming force.

"Its most typical effects are ethical and are manifested in redirected character. It evokes new qualities from human nature, new possibilities, new range and width, and raises it to new heights of heroism. It evolves its own ideal of character and thus its own unique scale of values.....If we take the finest expression of the pagan ideal of character and put it beside the authentic Christian saint, Socrates for example beside St. Francis, at once we are conscious of a distinction, indefinable but yet decisive. Among those born of women, as Christ might quite easily have said, there hath

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25. Deissmann, St. Paul, p 6ff.

26. Barry, Christianity in the New World, p 48.



not arisen a greater than Socrates; but he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. The beginnings of that transfiguring process are visible within the New Testament... and this is the essence of Christianity. Life is being transformed from within. If we ask the secret of the transformation, that is what the New Testament takes for granted. The servants which drew the water knew."<sup>27</sup>

Paul knew the source of his strength. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."<sup>28</sup>

Walter Rauschenbusch<sup>29</sup> was one of the eminent scholars to show the unity of theology and what has come to be called the social gospel. In a humorous vein he says that there are some modern ministers who "have a kind of dumb-bell system of thought, with the social gospel at one end and individual salvation at the other end, and an attenuated connection between them." He could not tolerate such a state of mind and insisted that both "ends" must be brought together in a single unity. Our theology must be large enough to contain the social gospel and alive enough not to hamper it. He does not develop a new theology or a new theory but accepts the orthodox system of our

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<sup>27</sup>. Barry, Op. Cit. p 48f.

<sup>28</sup>. Phil. 4:13.

<sup>29</sup>. Rauschenbusch, Theology for the Social Gospel, Christianizing the Social Order, Christianity and the Social Crisis.

Christian faith. Furthermore, he suggests that we do not need a new theology; we need only to see what is implicit in the theology we already have. He then proceeds to take all the old structural categories of our evangelical faith and shows the social implications which are at the very heart of them. He starts right at the place where most of the theologians began -- the Consciousness of Sin, the Nature of Sin, the Fall of Man, Salvation, the Church, the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, Revelation, Inspiration, Prophecy, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Eschatology, and the Atonement. Each one of these may convey the truth of Christian experience; but, according to Rauschenbusch, they are inherently social. There is a sense in which this thesis follows the same line. We are not trying to evolve any new social theory; we are not trying to make Paul's teaching over; yet we do want to see the social implications of what already exists.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIAL WORLD OF ST. PAUL

## THE SOCIAL WORLD OF ST. PAUL

The purpose of this chapter is to give a rapid survey of the social world in which Paul lived. It will of necessity be brief and as concise as possible. Without some description of the social and moral conditions of his world, much of his writing would be unintelligible and the social implications might be passed by.

We must never forget that Paul was a Jew. Judaism was a vital factor in the first century. It contributed much to his teaching, and yet he was not limited by its thought and forms. He was able to accomplish his work because he was a Roman citizen.<sup>1</sup> The fact that he could travel so extensively and establish the Christian faith in important commercial centers of a vast Roman Empire had its bearing upon his teaching. The social situation, the position and moral conditions of his converts in the churches to which he wrote and visited were all important factors. Could Christianity really satisfy the practical contemporary needs of the age? Could it meet the social

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1. Cf. Foakes-Jackson, Life of St. Paul, p 18f.

and individual needs better than Judaism, the oriental mysteries, the Greek and Roman cults of the time?<sup>2</sup>

There has always been much debate over the extent of the Hellenistic and Roman influences upon the character and teaching of Paul, but there is considerable agreement upon his heritage from Judaism. In Acts<sup>3</sup> it is recorded that Paul was a Jew, born in Tarsus and instructed by Gamaliel,<sup>4</sup> and according to the perfect manner of the law. In Philippians<sup>5</sup> Paul suggests that if any one has a right to boast, he has;

2. Case, Social Origins of Christianity, p 115f.

3. 22:3.

4. Montefiore in Judaism and St. Paul questions the validity of this statement. He does not believe that Paul was ever instructed by Gamaliel, for, if so, he could not have held such erroneous views of the law. He believes, however, that Paul was instructed in the Judaism of the Diaspora which he distinguishes from the Judaism and teaching of the Rabbinical School. He thinks that the Judaism of the Diaspora was not as pure and on as high a plane as the Judaism of the Rabbinical School. This accounts for Paul's reaction against the law and Montefiore believes this will explain better Paul's exposition of the law in Romans. However, this does not detract from our belief that Paul's social teaching was influenced by his Judaistic background whether it was of the Diaspora or from Gamaliel or others.

5. 3:5.

for "he was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." In this epistle to the Galatians,<sup>6</sup> he mentions the fact that they already knew a little of the history of his life, how he had been exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers.

The ubiquity and numbers of the Diaspora<sup>7</sup> were important not only for the spread of Christianity, but were a vital factor in the Graeco-Roman world of Paul's time. It has been said that wherever you found ten adult Jews, there was a synagogue or a house of prayer. The Jews were given concessions by the Roman Senate. Josephus mentions lists of legislation which were of special benefit to the Jews. In time of war both sides sought their help and influence. Caesar became their patron, and they lamented his assassination for a long period. Augustus continued the "pro-Jewish" policy which permitted them free and undisturbed privileges of worship throughout the empire.

As to the numbers of the Diaspora, it has been

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6. 1:14.

7. Angus, The Environment of Early Christianity, gives a summary of the power, wealth and extent of the Diaspora, p 143-150.

variously estimated. Angus<sup>8</sup> says that their numbers in the Roman Empire are variously estimated at eight million and more. Philo estimates that two-fifths of the population in Alexandria were Jewish in his day, and Philo places the numbers of Jews in Egypt at about one million. Josephus says, "There is no people on the earth that has not a portion of us," and he cites Strabo as declaring that they had "entered every city, and no place in the world can be found that has not received this race and been possessed by it."

Angus<sup>9</sup> points out that the wealth of the Jews must have been considerable if we are to judge from the immense treasures which accumulated in the temple. The contributions were so large that sometimes as many as a thousand Jews were appointed to carry it to Jerusalem. Josephus tells of two million, seven hundred thousand pilgrims visiting Jerusalem during a festival period. If we are to allow for exaggeration on his part, we would still have a large number who had the means and leisure for travel in his day.

Deissmann<sup>10</sup> believes that Paul's social class

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8. Op. Cit. p 146.

9. Op. Cit. p 148.

10. Deissmann, Paul, p 47f.

is an important special problem within the social world of Paul. To understand a man we need to know something of the class out of which he sprang, although "both the genius and the babbler can have their home in a palace as well as in a hovel." From the records<sup>11</sup> we know that Paul was a tent-maker and in Corinth he worked at his trade in the household of Aquila and Priscilla. Deissmann thinks that this would indicate that Paul, even though a native of a city of higher learning, was not one of the literary upper classes but came from an unliterary class and remained one of them. His preference for dictation rather than writing with his own hands<sup>12</sup> is best explained by the fact that his work had made his hands clumsy and writing was not easy for him. Even though Paul may not have produced literary masterpieces, his Greek does not sink to the level of expression found in many of the contemporary papyri. "On the ground of his language, Paul would be assigned to an elevated class."

"It is certainly, when all is said and done, extraordinarily difficult to solve the problem in social classes of antiquity; even in an attempt to discover Paul's social standing we are conscious that we can only feel our way

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11. Acts 18:3.

12. Gal. 6:11.



forward. But any one who recognizes the general scope of the problem, will at least admit that we have drawn a relatively clear line, in placing Paul below the literary upper classes and above the purely proletarian lowest classes.

If finally it is asked, to which side of this middle position the Apostle tends, the answer is: by birth and education, by sympathies and circumstances of life, he belongs far more to the middle and lower classes than to the upper class. He is no social climber forsaking his own class. As a missionary chiefly working amongst the unliterary masses of the great cities Paul did not patronisingly descend into a world strange to him: he remained in his own social world."<sup>13</sup>

At the end of Westcott and Hort's edition of the Greek New Testament, a list of the Old Testament quotations in the New is catalogued. In Romans there are 87 quotations, in I and II Corinthians there are 62, Galatians 19, Ephesians 30, Philippians 7, Colossians 5, I and II Thessalonians 23. Many of these quotations are from the Prophets which would indicate that Paul not only had a good knowledge of them but was influenced by them.

Surely it is not necessary here to quote at length from the teaching of the Prophets to show that they were teachers and preachers of social righteousness and that they demanded not only a right

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13. Deissmann, *Op. Cit.* p 50-1.

relationship to God but a right relationship between men. Chadwick shows very clearly in his treatise<sup>14</sup> the influence of the prophets and particularly Second Isaiah upon the social teaching of Paul and of the teaching of the New Testament generally. In the "Servant" passages, the "Divine Servant" narrows down from all the Jewish race to a section of the people, and then at last to a representative Individual. "So in the New Testament the conception of the 'Divine Servant' broadens out (almost from the first) from the Representative Individual -- our Lord, Who fulfills in Himself, in His work, in His perfect Self-Sacrifice, all the manifold forms of Divine service -- to the first circle of His followers, the 'infant Ecclesia.'"<sup>15</sup> For Chadwick<sup>16</sup> this accounts for the development among the first disciples of such ideas as (a) "The Messiahship and Servantship of Jesus, (b) the Servantship of His followers, not merely as individuals, but as members of the Society which He founded and which represents Him, was to be associated together and with Him in the Messianic work, and to aid in bringing about

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14. Chadwick, The Social Teaching of St. Paul,

15. *ibid.* p 66.

16. *ibid.* p 70f.

the Messianic state and reign." This would also account for the large place given in St. Paul's teaching to the ethical characteristics and virtues to be exhibited.

It is not the purpose of the writer to go into a detailed discussion of the Old Testament sources of Paul's teaching for that would require a volume in itself, but the influence of Paul's heritage from Judaism,<sup>17</sup> his uncompromising Jewish monotheism, the union of morality and religion, and his adherence to high ideals of moral purity, cannot be overlooked.

Dobschütz<sup>18</sup> in a summarizing statement says that the Jewish Christianity of Palestine trained by the law, was, so to speak, the backbone which supported the moral consciousness of the whole. The Judaistic conflict which Paul had in the churches in spite of its injurious effect, caused him to emphasize the moral aspects of his faith.

Sir William Ramsay<sup>19</sup> suggests that he who is to appreciate Paul rightly must make himself familiar with the life, surroundings, and education amid which he

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17. Cf. Enslin, The Ethics of St. Paul, p 1-16.

18. Dobschütz, Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p 172.

19. Ramsay, Pauline and Other Studies, p 332.

worked and preached and then proceed to study his works instead of always being on the lookout for Judaic ideas. Perhaps a good beginning in this direction would be to realize the importance of Tarsus, his native city with its fine university, which Strabo places above Athens and Alexandria in its zeal for learning. By sea and land, Tarsus was a famous port and caravan center, and it was the buckle which bound the East to the West.<sup>20</sup>

No doubt Paul was in his youth aware of the thought-forms and some of the social conditions which he later met in the various churches of the Graeco-Roman world. In his epistle to the Romans,<sup>21</sup> he admits that he is a debtor to both the Greeks and the barbarians. It is not our purpose to show the similarity<sup>22</sup> of his teaching to that of the Stoics or to

20. Morton, In the Steps of St. Paul.

21. 1:14.

22. There is considerable diversity of opinion as to the extent and force of the Hellenistic influence upon the character and teaching of Paul; Hausrath, Renan, Harnack, Farrar, Stevens, Enslin, Garvie and others minimise it, while Weiss, Pfleiderer, Baur, Lightfoot Jowett, Hicks, Ramsay, Alexander and others stress it. These and other writers go into rather detailed discussion showing the similarity of the phrases and thought-forms. Important as this is, space cannot be given to this aspect of the subject (con't next page)

what extent he may or may not have been influenced by the Oriental mystery cults which offered their converts a kind of salvation, except in so far as these might have affected his own teaching in order to meet the practical needs of the converts to Christianity.

It is important for us to see that Paul entered no empty world. As he himself expressed it when he visited Athens and stood in the middle of the Areopagus, addressing his audience thus, "Men of Athens, I observe at every turn that you are a most religious people."<sup>23</sup> Even the modern traveler who follows in the footsteps of Paul<sup>24</sup> becomes conscious at least in some measure, of the social world which was Paul's. Standing where Paul did at Athens one<sup>25</sup> can still see the

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in this thesis. The important thing for us to notice is that Paul the Jew, Paul the Roman citizen, was not a stranger in the religious, moral, and social world of his time. The fact that he counseled the early Christians so well, as we shall see later, would indicate that he did know the times and the life of the people. The atmosphere of the Greek and Roman cities, the bustle of the Roman world, the street, the market-place, the arena and the temple were reflected in his writings.

23. Acts 17:22 (Moffatt's Translation).

24. Morton, In the Footsteps of St. Paul.

25. The writer spent a very profitable period of study at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, travelling in the Holy Land, Asia Minor and the Mediterranean World, following in the footsteps of Paul.

ruins of the Grecian temples which indicated the important place religion and worship had in the ancient world.

Not one religion, but many, made what Bigg<sup>26</sup> has called "a sea of confusion"; the gods of Greece, of Rome, of Syria, of Persia, of Egypt, of the Carthaginians, the Africans, of Celts, of Teutons, and the gods of other peoples: all of these various deities cross and intermingle. In addition there were the religion and teaching of philosophers, pagan moralists, and plain people.

Because of the eventual breakdown of the Graeco-Roman world and the decay of the religious and moral life, the bright side of the picture of the moral world has often been overlooked. Stoicism, for example, was not merely a philosophy; it was a system of ethics and had its practical implications. In a sense it could be called a religion. In the writings of the Stoics could be found sayings regarding communion with God, the Holy Spirit, worship, self-examination, wisdom, freedom, self-control, providence, patience, submission, generosity, and cosmopolitanism. "The

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26. Bigg, The Churches Task Under the Empire, p 32.

philosophers say," states Epictetus, "that we are first to learn that there is a God; and that his providence directs the whole; and that it is not merely impossible to conceal from him our actions, but even our thoughts and emotions."<sup>27</sup> "When you are going before any of the great, remember, that there is another, who sees from above, what passes, and whom you ought to please, rather than man."<sup>28</sup> Seneca says, "God is near you, He is with you, He is within you. This is what I mean, Lucilius; a holy spirit indwells within us, one who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian."<sup>29</sup> There was, however, an element of hardness. There was no feeling of pity or sympathy. The practical demand on the part of the Stoic preachers for morality had a tonic effect, but they did little to recruit new converts. "The ideal Stoic was one like Cato, stern, impassive, isolated: The world is mad; let us not bother with it. Actually Stoicism became a religion of despair. In Lightfoot's happy phrase it was a 'staff of professors without classes,' and these professors were chiefly engaged in personal research problems."<sup>30</sup>

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27. The Discourses of Epictetus, Book II, Chap. XIV.

28. Works of Epictetus, Book I, Chap. XXX.

29. The Epistles of Seneca, Epistle XLI, 1-2.

30. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, p 33.

Paul's world had an abundance of mystery cults and fraternities. Kennedy<sup>31</sup> says that because the initiates were sworn to secrecy, we know far less about the actual rites and doctrines of the Mystery-Religions in the Graeco-Roman world than we do of their wide diffusion and potent influence. According to the account in Acts<sup>32</sup> some of the citizens who practised magic arts burned their books; this action gives us some idea of the potent force and influence of the secret cults.

Another important source of evidence for the influence of the Mystery-Religions which Paul had to face in the great centers of population like Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, is to be found in the numerous inscriptions which give us glimpses into the life of the religious cults.<sup>33</sup> There were the State-Mysteries of Eleusis, the Mystery-Cults of the Great Mother, Cybele with the Attis-ritual, the Mysteries of Isis-Serapis, the liturgy of Mithra, and other rituals in the Hermetic religion.

Regardless of the importance placed upon religion,

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31. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p 68f.

32. 19:18-19.

33. Kennedy, *ibid*, p 72ff. Cf. also, Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East.



the teachings of the best philosophers and moralists, and the abundance of mystery cults with their imposing ritual, there is a very dark side to the picture which cannot be overlooked. Seneca, for example, whose ethical essays have been used to illustrate the bright side and who minimised material things like vanity, amassed during the four years of his greatest prosperity, a fortune of three hundred millions of sesterces (over three million pounds), and, "while writing a treatise on Poverty, had in his house five hundred citrus tables, tables of veined wood brought from Mount Atlas, which sometimes cost as much as five thousand pounds, and even fourteen thousand pounds. The same Seneca who preached so much about purity of morals was openly accused of adultery with Julia and Agrippina, and led his pupil Nero into still more shameful practises. It was he, too, who composed the letter in which Nero justified before the Senate the murder of his own mother."<sup>34</sup> Nero's act also indicates the low morality of the time. Furthermore, the senate voted him new honours and offered prayers of thanksgiving in the temples.

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34. Uhlhorn, The Conflict of Christianity, p 94.

Not only with a few individuals were morals low, but generally throughout the empire. Paul's description of moral conditions in Romans<sup>35</sup> was no exaggeration. There was little value placed upon marriage or family life. In Greece women had an inferior position. The courtesan was raised to a higher rank than the wife and occupied a more prominent and noble position in the national life.

Corinth was noted for its licentiousness. The hetairai served the temple of Aphrodite. Married men were allowed to take the slaves of their household for concubines. The law did say that the children born of concubines were deprived of their civil rights, but the father was allowed to adopt them, and in that way they could share the love of the wife along with the rightful children.<sup>36</sup>

The wife enjoyed a little better position in Rome, but moral conditions were no better. She rose to a position of equality with her husband, but men could put their wives away for the slightest cause and the women had the same privilege. Seneca tells of women who marked their chronology by the names of their

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35. 1:18ff.

36. Schmidt, The Social Result of Early Christianity, p 42f.

husbands rather than by the consuls. "Is there any woman that blushes at divorce now that certain illustrious and noble ladies reckon their years, not by the number of consuls, but by the number of their husbands, and leave home in order to marry, and marry in order to be divorced? They shrank from this scandal as long as it was rare; now, since every gazette has a divorce case, they have learned to do what they used to hear so much about. Is there any shame at all for adultery now that matters have come to such pass that no woman has any use for a husband except to inflame her paramour? Chastity is simply a proof of ugliness. Where will you find any woman so wretched, so unattractive, as to be content with a couple of paramours -- without having each hour assigned to a different one? And the day is not long enough for them all, but she must be carried in her litter to the house of one, and spend the night with another. She is simple and behind the times who is not aware that living with one paramour is called 'marriage.'"<sup>37</sup> Ladies of high birth even had their names enrolled in the police register of common prostitutes in order

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37. Seneca on Benefits III, 16:2-4.

that they might abandon themselves entirely to the most wanton excesses.<sup>38</sup>

Schmidt<sup>39</sup> says that although concubinage was no longer held a disgrace, concubines took the more decent names of friends. Tombs were raised to their memory, on which their description was inscribed without any snock to morality; it even happened that the name of the wife and the concubine who followed after her death were engraved upon the same marble.

With such conditions prevailing in the Graeco-Roman world, it is easy to imagine the low esteem in which children were held. The attitude toward children, it may be asserted, has always been considered a fair test of the moral standard of any community. One of the most commonly quoted references<sup>40</sup> is a letter from a Roman father to his wife, "If you have a child,

38. Angus in his, The Environment of Early Christianity, says that Cato gave his wife to his friend Hortensius, and married her again after his friend's death. Cicero divorced Terentia partly to get another dower, and divorced his next wife because she was not sufficiently sorry for the death of Tullia. Augustus took Livia from her husband when she was three months pregnant. Divorce entailed no disadvantages. There are examples of men lending wives to friends, or borrowing their friend's wife for a period.

39. Schmidt, Op. Cit. p 43.

40. MacKinnon, The Rome of St. Paul, p 133.

and it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it." Exposure of children was not confined to the luxury classes, but was practised by all classes. Children of legal marriage as well as children of illicit connections suffered the same horrible fate. Some of the exposed children were saved, but they were saved and reared for the purpose of prostitution.

The practice of abortion among the Greeks and Romans of all classes was widespread. There was no law against it in Greece or the Roman Empire. Plato and Aristotle recommended it. The motives for abortion were poverty, indulgence, avoidance of pain, or fear of disfigurement. Even those who wished children practised it because foundlings were easily obtainable.

The worst vice of all seemed to be that of paiderastia. Some of the best names in Greek and Roman history were addicted to this unnatural love, i.e., Parmenides, Sophocles, Aristotle, Julius Caesar, Antoninus, Hadrian, and Trajan. Socrates speaks lightly of it.<sup>41</sup>

When life is so cheap, it is not strange to find that slavery was prevalent in Paul's time. We shall

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41. Angus, Op. Cit. p 50.

discuss later Paul's answer to this problem and the other problems mentioned in this chapter. At present we are concerned about getting a general view of the social world in which he moved and the problems which he and the early Christians had to face.

The number of slaves has been variously reckoned. Angus<sup>42</sup> cites a few examples which show how widespread it was:-

"Alexander sold 30,000 Thebans. In a census of Athens in the time of Demetrius Phalereus, there were 400,000 slaves to 20,000 freemen. In Corinth, 460,000 were found. Under the closing Roman Republic and the early Empire, slavery reached its acme. Aemilius Paulus at the close of the war with Perseus sold 150,000 freemen of Epirus. After the victories of Marius, 60,000 Cimbri and 90,000 Teutons are said to have been sold. Before the second Punic war, when Rome annexed Sardinia and Corsica, so many captives were sold that there arose a proverb, *Sardi Venales*, 'as cheap as Sardinians.' In the slave wars of Sicily Eunus had 200,000 armed slaves. In the insurrection of Spartacus the numbers vary from 40,000 to 100,000, of whom 10,000 were executed by Crassus. Caesar sold 63,000 Gauls on a single occasion. Augustus tells on the *Monumentum Ancyranum* that he delivered to their masters for execution 30,000. Trajan caused 10,000 slaves to engage in mutual slaughter to amuse the Roman people for four months. In the second century B.C. as many as 10,000 were sold in the Delos market in one day. Private Roman establishments possessed enormous numbers, amounting in some cases to 20,000. Crassus had over 500 carpenters and architects alone.

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42. Angus, Op. Cit. p 38.

Scaurus owned over 4000 urban slaves and as many country ones. A freedman under Augustus left 4116."

The following quotation from Tacitus is sufficient to give us an idea of the extreme treatment accorded the slaves.

"Not long after, Pedanius Secundus, praefect of the city, was murdered by his own slave; either upon refusing him his liberty, for which he had bargained at a certain price, or that he was enraged by jealousy in respect of a pathic, and could not bear his master for a rival. Now, since according to ancient custom the whole family of slaves, who upon such occasion abode under the same roof, must be subjected to capital punishment; such was the conflux of the people, who were desirous of saving so many innocent lives, that matters proceeded even to sedition: in the senate itself were some who were favorable to the popular side, and rejected such excessive rigor; while many, on the contrary voted against admitting any innovation."<sup>43</sup>

"Caius Cassius, the celebrated Stoic, was one who defended the law and urged its enforcement. Nero had to finally rebuke the populace with an edict and all the slaves were then executed."<sup>44</sup>

The mentality of the age can be seen, says MacKinnon<sup>45</sup> in Augustus' will, for he mentions with pride that he had exhibited 8,000 gladiators and 3,150 wild beasts. History will never know the number of slaves who met their fate in the arena and at public festivals, or the extent of their human

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43. Tacitus, Annals XIV, 42.

44. Tacitus, Annals XIV, 43-45.

45. MacKinnon, Op. Cit. p 135.

suffering.

In all fairness it should be noted here that there was some attempt on the part of a few individuals to alleviate the terrible conditions. Many masters did live on warm terms with their slaves. Epicurus was known for his kindness to slaves and he treated them as equals.

Seneca in his famous forty-seventh epistle to Lucilius points out that slaves can be friends and should be treated as such:-

"I am glad to learn, through those who come from you, that you live on friendly terms with your slaves. This befits a sensible and well-educated man like yourself. 'They are slaves,' people declare. Nay, rather they are men. 'Slaves!' No, comrades. 'Slaves!' No, they are unpretentious friends. 'Slaves!' No, they are fellow-slaves, if one reflects that Fortune has equal rights over slaves and free men alike.

"That is why I smile at those who think it degrading for a man to dine with his slave."<sup>46</sup>

Some of the lawyers of the time began to recognise that all men, including slaves, had rights as men.<sup>47</sup> In course of time, slaves were allowed to purchase their freedom, and it has been noted that the freedmen took the place of the dwindling middle class

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46. Seneca's Moral Epistles, XLVII, 1-2a.

47. Foakes-Jackson, The Life of Saint Paul, p 54.



in Rome. Taken as a whole, however, all attempts to alleviate the miserable conditions of the slaves were futile.

The way people amuse themselves has been another standard for judging the social and moral conditions of a period. And here again we are forced to record the dark side of the picture. The stage was a degrading factor. The plots of the plays were mostly of an obscene character and satisfied the basest tendencies of the populace. There were scenes of adultery and seduction.

The spectacles of the amphitheatres which were widespread throughout the Roman Empire were more demoralising than the stage. Gladiatorial games were even introduced under the pretext of religion.<sup>48</sup> Gladiatorial shows were given at festival times, at public games, and at the banquets of the wealthy classes. Gladiatorial shows were popular in Corinth. That the gladiatorial games "continued for centuries, with scarcely a protest, is one of the most startling facts in moral history."<sup>49</sup>

This rapid survey of the social and moral conditions in the world of Paul will help us to see the

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48. Angus, *Op. Cit.* p 43.

49. Lecky, History of European Morals, p 271.  
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complexity of the problem which the early Christians had to face. It is true that there were some worthy characters in pagan society. There were some fine examples of literature and art. But men hated each other. The gods were ridiculed. Pleasures were of the baser sort. Society was united only superficially. Human life was cheap.

Charles Clayton Morrison<sup>50</sup> says that "if early Christianity had adjusted itself to Judaism or pagan Rome, if it had conformed to existing secular institutions, there would have been no Christianity in the sense that history reveals it. But because its own social vision of a coming Kingdom, for which the Christian community was a preparation, was set over against the kingdoms of this world in a fashion which forbade conformity, there developed among the early Christians a distinctive inner life more beautiful than anything the world had ever seen. A religion that conforms to the secular order, that finds its ethical standards from the secular order, that finds its moral level in conformity to the secular order, cannot be a radiantly creative religion. It can be a complacent religion, a comfortable and perhaps a

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50. The Social Gospel and the Christian Cultus,  
p 199.

consolatory religion, but it will altogether lack that spontaneous creativity which is the source of all deep, intense and persistent joy."

The pagan had looked for inner satisfaction in many strange cults, but his religion had become bankrupt. There seemed to be no real salvation for himself, for the society in which he lived. But Paul had discovered a more Excellent Way.

## CHAPTER III

### PAUL AND SLAVERY

## PAUL AND SLAVERY

This is a subject which brings us face to face with one of the most heinous social evils of Paul's day. We have already noted<sup>1</sup> something of the extent of slavery in the Graeco-Roman world and its evil effects. We also are aware that there was some protest against the evil and an emphasis on a greater kindness. Seneca in his famous forty-seventh epistle to Lucilius treats the subject fully but does not favor abolition:

"I do not wish to involve myself in too large a question, and to discuss the treatment of slaves, towards whom we Romans are excessively haughty, cruel, and insulting. But this is the kernel of my advice: Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters. And as often as you reflect how much power you have over a slave, remember that your master has just as much power over you."<sup>2</sup>

Phillips in his book on The New Commandment<sup>3</sup> points out that even though the inferior sort of slaves may have been treated with great brutality, he feels that in the main, the influence of Stoicism was fast bringing about a far more humane treatment of the slave than previously.

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1. Chapter II, page 37.

2. Seneca's Moral Epistle, XLVII, 12.

3. Page 62f.

Deissmann<sup>4</sup> tells of various ways in which a slave might gain his freedom by the act of manumitting which was recognised by ancient law. One of the ways was connected with worship in the temple. The owner would bring a slave to the temple and sell him to their god and receive the purchase money which had been previously paid by the slave. The slave then became the property of the god, not as a slave in his former standing, but as a "protege." In his relationship with the world, and especially with his former master, he stood as a free man. The rite took place before witnesses, a record was made, and many times the event was perpetuated on a stone. This custom seems to have been rather common. Here is a sample:-

"Date. 'N. N. sold to the Pythian Apollo a male slave named X. Y. at a price of -- minae, for freedom (or on condition that he shall be free, etc.).' Then follow any special arrangements and the names of the witnesses."<sup>5</sup>

"Another form, which occurs less frequently, is sale to the god as trustee." An inscription of 200-199 B.C. on the polygonal wall at Delphi may serve

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4. Deissmann, Light From the Ancient East, p 322f.

5. Deissman, Op. Cit. p 322.

as an example:-

Ἐπρίατο ὁ Ἀπολλων,  
 ὁ Πύθιος παρασιβίου  
 Ἀμφισσοῦ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίαι  
 σωμα γυναικεῖον, αἱ  
 ὄνομα Νικάια, τὸ γένος  
 Ῥωμαίαν, τιμᾶς ἀργυρίου  
 μνᾶν τριῶν καὶ ἡμιμναίου.  
 Προσποδῶτα κατὰ τὸν νόμον  
 Εὐμναστός Ἀμφισσοῦς,  
 τὰν τιμὰν ἀπέχει.  
 τὰν δὲ ὥρᾶν  
 ἐπίστευσε Νικάια  
 τῷ Ἀπολλωνι  
 ἐπ' ἐλευθερίαι.

Date. Apollo the Pythian bought from Sosibius of Amphissa, for freedom, a female slave, whose name is Nicaea, by race a Roman, with a price of three minae of silver and a half mina. Former seller according to the law: Eumnastus of Aphhissa. The price he hath received. The purchase, however, Nicaea hath committed unto Apollo, for freedom.

Names of witnesses, etc., follow."<sup>6</sup>

One might expect Paul to issue a social pronouncement and condemn slavery from the very first, but if such is the case, then we shall be disappointed for he does not openly condemn slavery as a social institution. Neither does he recommend its immediate abolition. Nor can we truthfully say that Paul approved slavery even though he did send Onesimus,<sup>7</sup> the slave, back to his master, Philemon. Nor can we say that Paul was giving a final approval of slavery

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6. Deissmann, Op. Cit. p 323.

7. Philemon 12.

when he says to the Corinthians<sup>8</sup> that every one must remain in the condition of life into which he was called. As we shall see later, Paul attacks the problem from a different angle. Slavery was only one factor in an evil society. Something else more fundamental must be done than just a legislative reform movement made against one particular evil. He does not sidestep the issue even though upon first investigation we do not find a social manifesto.

Various answers have been volunteered for Paul's failure to condemn slavery at the outset and to demand that all slave owners in the church emancipate their slaves. Brace,<sup>9</sup> Dobschütz,<sup>10</sup> and Schmidt<sup>11</sup> suggest that to have done so would have thrown the world into a revolution, "which would have let loose a war of extermination between masters and slaves, which would have turned Europe and Asia into a field of blood and slaughter." Cadoux<sup>12</sup> asks how could a social revolution or a general slave-war be precipi-

8. I Cor. 7:20.

9. Brace, Gesta Christi, p 45.

10. Dobschütz, Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p 118.

11. Schmidt, The Social Result of Early Christianity, p 216f.

12. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World, p 133.



tated by a few handful of masters emancipating their slaves? The right of public agitation was limited in the Roman world. Any attempt to alleviate the condition of any social class would have been immediately stopped. The case<sup>13</sup> has already been cited of a slave who assassinated his master because of a broken promise of freedom. As a result, the Roman Senate consented to the execution of all the slaves in the household, to the number of four hundred persons. There could have been no anti-slavery meetings with such conditions predominating. Rauschenbusch<sup>14</sup> adds that the most ardent socialist of our day would have stepped softly if he had been in Paul's place.

"Any attempt to arouse the people against the oppression of the government or the special privileges of the possessing classes, would have been choked off with relentless promptness. If, for instance, any one had been known to sow discontent among the vast and ever-threatening slave population -- which was not negro but white -- he would have had short shrift. Society was tensely alert against any possible slave rising. If a slave killed his master, the law provided that every slave of that household should be killed, even if there was no trace of complicity. Upper-class philosophers might permit themselves very noble and liberal sentiments only because there was no connection between them and the masses, and their sentiments ended in perfumed smoke.

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13. Chapter II page 38.

14. Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p 152.

Under such circumstances any prudent man will husband his chances of life and usefulness, and drop the seeds of truth warily. If the convictions of William Lloyd Garrison (and we might add William Wilberforce) had burned in Paul, we should probably not know that Paul had ever existed. There is no parallel between such a situation and our own country where we are ourselves the citizen-kings, and where the right of moral agitation is almost unlimited. The parallel would have to be sought with American missionaries working among the Armenians in Turkey, or with evangelical sectarians in Russia before the present revolution. Our missionaries in China are in privileged position, yet they have to let official corruption alone or their consuls are likely to hear from the mandarins."<sup>15</sup>

Modern missionaries<sup>16</sup> have also attested to the truth of Paul's method and way of dealing with certain social evils in society. John Smith working among slaves of Demerara did not stir up a revolt. He did not demand emancipation of the slaves. He used Paul's method of preaching the truth of Christ and raising their lives to a new moral dignity. He preached a gospel which was bound in the end to set the slaves free.

One of the important reasons for Paul's apparent desire for Onesimus' return to his master was that Onesimus had either robbed Philemon or had misappro-

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15. Rauschenbusch, Op. Cit. p 152-3

16. Cf. Smith of Demerara, by David Chamberlin.

priated funds. Paul felt that he should make the loss right and even offered to make it right from his pocketbook.<sup>17</sup> It is interesting in this connection to remember that Jesus had said once if your brother has any grievance against you, go and be reconciled with your brother first.<sup>18</sup> Paul was anxious that the wrong should be righted and this could be considered as a factor in the situation. Just what Paul would have done and would have suggested if Philemon had been a cruel task-master, we do not know. Ramsay<sup>19</sup> doubts very much whether Paul would have directed a slave to return to his master if he had not been allowed to practise the duties of the Christian religion and especially if the slaves were forced to minister to vice and to give up their children to vice according to the sanctioned customs of the times, or if the slave had been ordered to offer sacrifices to the gods and curse Christ.

Another factor in the situation which affected Paul's attitude to this grave social problem was the Parousia which would tend to make the matter of

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17. Philemon 18.

18. Mt. 5:24.

19. Ramsay, The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day, p 248-9.

immediate abolition unimportant. Not only Paul, but all the early church expected the speedy return of the Lord and this event would mean the spiritualisation of all the material world.<sup>20</sup> There were some who naturally thought that this event would usher in an age of justice and happiness and all the social ills would be solved in this great catastrophe. Under the strain and tension of the times, it would not be advisable to advocate such a radical change in society.

There are other writers<sup>21</sup> who feel that the full force of the incompatibility between slavery and Christianity was not appreciated at the time. It seems unequivocal to us now because we have a long view and can look back upon history and see all the various factors in the situation. Cadoux<sup>22</sup> thinks that we do Paul an injustice in suggesting his failure to disapprove of slavery from considerations of expediency, etc.

The very title of this thesis helps us to keep on the track and seek for the real facts of the problem, for the social implications of Paul's teaching

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20. I Cor. 15. Rom. 8:18-25.

21. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World, p 133.  
Dale, Lectures on the Ephesians, p 406.

Enslin, The Ethics of St. Paul, p 206.

22. Cadoux, Op. Cit. p 133, Note 2.



touched the heart of the question. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ," says Paul.<sup>23</sup> One cannot read such a statement without feeling and seeing the implications of such a statement upon the institution of slavery. This is not the only reference to the problem. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit."<sup>24</sup> "Tell no lies to one another; you have stripped off the old nature with its practices, and put on the new nature which is renewed in the likenesses of its Creator for the knowledge of him. In it there is no room for Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free man; Christ is everything and everywhere."<sup>25</sup> In the body of Christ, in the spiritual household, in the newly formed Christian community, in the Divine Commonwealth,<sup>26</sup> the slave is raised to an equal standard. He is no longer a product of the slave-market to be looked upon as a source of

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23. Gal. 3:28.

24. I Cor. 12:13.

25. Col. 3:9-11 (Moffatt's Translation).

26. From The Meaning of Paul for Today, by Dodd.

profit but has an equal standing with other men and is a person to be held in affectionate regard. "The solidarity of the Christian brotherhood is the main point here."<sup>27</sup>

This attitude toward slavery comes out very clearly in Paul's treatment of Onesimus, the slave of Philemon. It is true that Onesimus is sent back as a slave<sup>28</sup> although he is sent back as a beloved brother, and he gives Philemon a fairly straight hint that he ought to give Onesimus his freedom.<sup>29</sup>

Those who view Paul's treatment of slavery as rather unsatisfactory in the light of modern ethical ideas and accepted mores, overlook the social implications of this new relationship of the slave. Philemon as a Christian and as a member of the little Christian group meeting in his house would be on the same level

27. Dobschütz, Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p 118.

28. There is one instance where Paul recommends a slave to take his freedom if he can. I Cor. 7:21, ("You were a slave when you were called? Never Mind. Of course, if you do find it possible to get free, you had better avail yourself of the opportunity." Moffatt's Translation).

29. Philemon 21. Anderson Scott, in Footnotes to St. Paul, p 6, believes that Philemon did receive him as a brother in Christ or else this little letter, once a single MSS sheet would never have been preserved.

before Christ. They would participate in the Holy Sacrament on the same basis. They were brothers "in Christ." Philemon, according to the Roman custom, had a right to punish Onesimus, consider him so much property to use as he pleased, but as a Christian, Philemon was restricted; and therein lies the significant social implication of Paul's teaching. Philemon or any other master who became a Christian must treat slaves as brothers "in Christ." That treatment must extend beyond the hour of the sacrament or the place of meeting to include all of the material relationships of life. This new standard would eventually extract the evil from the institution of slavery and put an end to it as a system. Slavery would be left an empty shell.

Knowling<sup>30</sup> says that the implications of Paul's teaching on slavery must have been a vital factor, for in the thousands of epitaphs which have been deciphered in the catacombs, not one reference has been found naming the bearer as a slave or a free man. Racial and social distinctions were not emphasised. E. D. Pressense<sup>31</sup> in his book also makes a point of the same

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30. Knowling, Testimony of Paul to Christ, p 460.

31. E. De Pressense, The Early Years of Christianity, Vol. 4, p 499.

fact. The social implications of Paul's teaching on slavery become such a vital factor that for the Christian, slavery loses its terrors and Paul can now use the figure of a slave in such a manner so as to describe a Christian relation to God. "But now being made free from sin, and become bondservants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification and the end eternal life."<sup>32</sup> "Ye were bought with a price: become not bondservants of men."<sup>33</sup>

Even though Onesimus or any other slave may have kept his place as a slave or servant after becoming a Christian, he was not to look upon his master as some one to dodge, to fear, or to cheat and, likewise, the master no longer took advantage of his workmen or slaves and considered them as so much chattel. There was one Master over all.

"Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters here below with reverence and trembling, with singleness of heart as to Christ Himself; instead of merely working when their eye is on you, like those who court human favor, do God's will from the heart like servants of Christ, by rendering service with good-will as to the Lord and Master, not to men. Be sure that every one, slave or free, will be paid back by the Lord and Master for the good he has done. And as for you, master,

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32. Rom. 6:22.

33. I Cor. 7:23.



act by your servants in the same way, and stop threatening them; be sure that they and you have a Lord and Master in heaven, and there is no partiality about him."<sup>34</sup>

The social implications of this principle which sets forth a mutual basis of service and respect for master and servant, employer or employee, stand out very clearly when we recall the accepted standard of the time between master and servant. This new social relationship is almost revolutionary when compared with treatment which was acceptable in the time of Paul.<sup>35</sup> When we remember, as was pointed out in the chapter on The Social World of Paul, what the accepted standard of treatment of slaves could be, we shudder at the thought of what might have happened to Onesimus upon his return to Philemon.

E. F. Scott is right when he emphasises in his commentary on Philemon<sup>36</sup> that Paul was not offering any sentimental solution to a serious problem and by courteously insisting that Philemon receive Onesimus as more than a slave, recognising him as a beloved brother in Christ, he was doing more than merely denouncing slavery or delivering a social manifesto;

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34. Eph. 6:5-9, (Moffatt's Translation).

35. Chapter II.

36. Page 110.

he was striking at the very root of slavery. He was giving a new attitude toward the slave as a man. He, too, was a son of God. He becomes not only "a beloved brother in Christ" but "a brother for whom Christ died." Instead of legislating against it or merely carrying on a noisy verbal crusade against this great social evil, he gave the social principle of human brotherhood which eventually abolished it.

Finally, Paul's principle has social implications for all human relationships of the present. The old institution of slavery may have been abolished, but we have slavery in other forms. If Paul's principle is applied, then men cannot be treated as mere machines, as mere physical means to an end. Obligations to workers are not fulfilled when they are given money. They must be treated with kindness and respect and friendship. They are divine ends in themselves. Those who work in factories, those who look after the parks, those who take care of our homes -- they are more than servants; they are brothers beloved.

## CHAPTER IV

### PAUL AND THE FAMILY

## PAUL AND THE FAMILY

Whatever interpretation writers may give to Paul's teaching concerning family relationships, we are safe in saying in the beginning of this chapter that Paul was not indifferent to the subject. We find many references in his epistles, some of which are rather long in comparison to the treatment of other social problems.

Here again we find a great divergence of opinion concerning the implication of Paul's teaching. Cadoux<sup>1</sup> suggests that there is good reason for this inasmuch as his ideas and convictions were derived from many different circumstances. It is only natural then, that there should be some divergent tendencies which may not be easily harmonised.

Morgan<sup>2</sup> after quoting a few scriptural references dealing with family relationships seems to feel that the Apostle abides by what was the antique view, both Jewish and pagan. He feels that Paul merely tolerates marriage and nowhere attempts to

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1. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World,  
p 122.

2. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul,  
p 188-89.

establish it on a moral basis or express any emotion for the home. And notwithstanding his statement that there is no distinction between male and female in Christ, he does not live up to his assertion and relegates woman to a position of subordination in the church and that on the ground of her natural inferiority.

Sir William Ramsay<sup>3</sup> warns us against taking too narrow a view of Paul's conception of social life and the family and against judging his teaching by what he says in one instance, especially I Corinthians 7. All his utterances must be taken into consideration as well as the social condition of the time. Something of the moral conditions affecting family life and the status of women has already been indicated in a previous chapter.<sup>4</sup> W. H. S. Jones<sup>5</sup> gives a good summarising statement:-

"The virtue of chastity was confined within the narrow limits, such as loyalty to the husband on the part of the wife. Men were under no obligations, except that of avoiding adultery or dishonour to a neighbour's family. It is hard to find a passage in pre-Christian Greek literature where loose intercourse is looked upon as in itself a moral offence. Sexual indulgence stood upon exactly

3. Ramsay, The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day, p 263f.

4. The Social World of Paul, p 34.

5. Jones, Greek Morality, p 118-19.

the same moral level as eating and drinking. Philosophy made no attempt to alter this moral attitude. Even the Stoics, with their relatively ascetic morality, made no effort to combat the sensuality of the time."

Dobschütz<sup>6</sup> concludes, after recognising that there were, no doubt, many houses where honourable family life was maintained, that nevertheless, it could not "be denied that unparalleled shamelessness had spread over wide circles. Unutterable things were done without any secrecy. Divorces were of daily occurrence, adultery was common, and unchastity considered no sin. Antinous, the plaything of an Emperor, was deified. The wife was slighted and coquetted with; the upbringing of children was left to slaves. Human life was little valued. Not a few persons were sacrificed to magical rites. Poison removed the inconvenient. Suicide, either voluntary or compulsory, ended many a promising career. The philosophy of Seneca reveals the moral bankruptcy even of the best. Alongside of frivolousness and satire there existed religion. But this was without moral force. On the contrary, the myths, dramatised

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6. Dobschütz, Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p 367.  
Cf. Ullhorn, The Conflict of Christianity, p 97-104.

and parodied, were demoralising. The old ceremonial, renewed by Augustus, was in reality only a matter of form, the worship of the Emperor a political act. The new Oriental cults, sometimes with expensive festivals and horrible mysteries, were only superstition, a means of quieting fearful consciences by penances of all sorts, a mere outward purification with no inward value. And as the climax of all, there was the chief tendency of the time, the most impious and most immoral of all religions -- Astrology."

If these social conditions are fully realised, and if the whole of Paul's teaching be kept in mind, no one can fail to appreciate to some extent, Paul's problem and the force of the social power of his teaching. Perhaps we should place first his clear-cut statement to the Galatians<sup>7</sup> and there should be no doubt of the social implication of its context.

"You are all sons of God by your faith in Christ Jesus (for all of you who had yourselves baptized into Christ have taken on the character of Christ). There is no room for Jew or Greek, there is no room for slave or freeman, there is no room for male or female; you are all one in Christ."

Dean Inge<sup>8</sup> calls this the most important state-

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7. Gal. 3:26-28. (Moffatt's Translation).

8. Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, p 281.

ment of all. There were serious distinctions in the very communities where the Christian Church was organised, but for followers of Christ there could be no distinction. Women were on an equal basis just as the slave was raised to a new dignity and moral value. Of course, this principle was revolutionary so far as the Graeco-Roman world was concerned, but the social implication of such a principle was only gradually applied.

When we turn to the problem as it is discussed in Corinthians, we can see that there are definite problems which Paul is having to answer. The Christians seem to be asking him for some practical advice, for the seventh chapter of First Corinthians opens in this way, "Now about the questions in your letter."

At first Paul seems to suggest celibacy as the answer to their problem. This would seem contrary, not only to Paul's Jewish training, but to the paganism of the time.<sup>9</sup> In the Old Testament there is no objection to marriage. Even the priests were allowed to marry. The ideal of the Hebrew was to be

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9. Enslin, The Ethics of St. Paul, p 189-90.



fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28). Security and happiness depended to a great extent upon marrying and having a large family. One of the Psalmists says that "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them."<sup>10</sup> One who is blessed of God shall have a wife who is as a fruitful vine beside the house and children like olive plants round about the table.<sup>10a</sup> It was a disgrace for a Jewish woman to be barren. Therefore, anything which might hold marriage up as obnoxious would be contrary to the Jews and their background. Of course, evils had developed in their system, but in comparison to the pagan world, the Jews had a much higher standard. The social implications of Paul's high standard of being "one in Christ" and other teaching which we shall observe and discuss later, would have a moral effect on the evils of their system. The point we note here, however, is that Paul did not carry over any idea of celibacy from his Judaistic background.

Nor did Paul borrow this idea from the pagan world even though there were some instances of

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10. 127:4-5.

10a. Psalm 128:3.

celibacy.<sup>11</sup> In Greece the priestesses were expected to remain virgins, at least during their periods of ministration. Eunuch priests were fairly common in the cults of the Ephesian Artemis. In cases where permanent celibacy was required, it was limited to the priests and the priestesses and not extended to the members of the cult. Nor was celibacy advised by Stoics.

"Before marriage, guard yourself with all your ability from unlawful intercourse with women; yet be not uncharitable or severe to those who are led into this, nor frequently boast that you yourself do otherwise."<sup>12</sup>

Epictetus advises celibacy for the Cynic and even used the same word, ἀπεριπαρόντως (without distraction), which Paul uses in I Corinthians 7:35. The same idea is expressed by both: freedom from marriage means freedom to serve God. For the ordinary man, however, marriage was taken for granted and permissible. In fact, Epictetus ridicules the Epicureans who discouraged marriage and parenthood on the ground that these disturbed their tranquility.

"Then why do you, Epicurus, dissuade a wise man from bringing up children? Why are you

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11. Enslin, Op. Cit. p 185

12. Epictetus, The Enchiridion, 33.

afraid, upon their account, he may fall into anxieties?"<sup>13</sup>

Another reason for Paul's attitude on this social problem of celibacy and marriage was the nearness of the end of the age.<sup>14</sup> The fact of the Parousia does not promote indifference to the problem but rather because of it, the Christians in Corinth are to remain as they are if they can. He suggests that it would be unwise to change their status, although it could not be said that Paul objected to marriage. He holds that it is honourable and good for people to marry, and he makes it clear that his remarks on this subject of celibacy and marriage are not a command but counsel. He is not setting forth the ethical principle here but merely giving advice. In case there might be some who would misunderstand him, he explicitly says in I Corinthians 7:28 that there is no sin in marriage.

It is to be remembered also that Peter, most of the Apostles, and the brothers of Jesus were married men and took their wives about with them on their

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13. Epictetus I, 23. He also ridicules Epicurus for the custom of deserting children; says that Epicurus' parents would not have been guilty of deserting him even if they had known he would be the author of such doctrines.  
 14. I Cor. 7:26, 29, 31. (Moffatt's Translation.)

missionary journeys; and Paul insisted that he had the right to do the same though he did not exercise it (I Corinthians 9:5). There is no hint against the honourable estate of marriage from the Gospel writers. Jesus held that it was ordained of God (Mk. 10:2-12). In the Pastoral Epistles we get a violent attack upon those who forbade marriage (I Timothy 4:3).

Scott<sup>15</sup> thinks that any apparent inconsistency in Paul's treatment of the subject and lack of clarity in his own mind was the fact that he was torn between two ideals, the ideal of celibacy and the ideal in common practice. He saw the moral and happy condition of those who were together "in the Lord." Yet for himself and the life he had chosen, with its hardship and travel, it was impractical for him to assume the responsibilities of a home. He had received from God what he calls the "grace-gift of self-control."

Perhaps one of the most reasonable explanations for Paul's reply to their requests for advice lies in the peculiar moral problems which had arisen in this community. The Christians were slipping back into their old pagan habits of living. Paul was shocked at

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15. Scott, Footnotes to St. Paul, p 95-6.

their lack of conscience. Although Paul is not referring again to the case of incest and immorality in the Fifth Chapter of Corinthians when he says in Chapter Seven that it would be better for them not to touch a woman at all, he realises the dangers and temptations of the time. With the moral level so low and some of the spiritually minded unconcerned, it would be difficult to direct them towards a sane view to marriage and sex relationships.

Thus we see how careful one must be in attempting to deduce Paul's view on family relationships and marriage without viewing the subject as a whole and realising to the fullest extent the tremendous social problems and forces at work in those early Christian communities. Anderson Scott<sup>16</sup> points out that Paul might think that celibacy was the best for himself and could be recommended to others under various circumstances, nevertheless, "he saw in marriage the God-given prophylactic for all sexual irregularities (I Corinthians 7:2, 9). It is not true to say that he gave only a grudging approval to marriage. He may be thought of as one who is naturally celibate, not through conscious or

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16. Anderson Scott, New Testament Ethics,  
p 124-25.

deliberate choice, still less in consequence of any opinion, such as afterwards came to be strongly held, that the state of virginity was morally superior to the state of marriage, but simply through entire absorption in his apostolic work. He admits, when he dissuades widows from remarrying, that he is speaking according to his own conviction (I Cor. 7:40), and recognises that in this matter God gives one kind of grace-gift to one man, another to another (I Cor. 7:7). He himself has the "grace-gift of self-control."

When we pass on to other portions<sup>17</sup> of Paul's teaching on family relationships, we find that he raises marriage to the highest ideal possible when he likens it unto the union of Christ and the Church. So many writers in discussing the problem of marriage seem to overlook the preceding verses in Ephesians which are important in a complete consideration of the problem. Christians form the body of Christ. All the members are different, but they are bound up together and are to work for a common end. The Church is to be a unity and it is to stand out against the world. They are to live no longer as pagans.<sup>18</sup> They

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17. Eph. 5:21-33.

18. Eph. 4:17; 5:21.

are to be subject one to another out of reverence to Christ who is the head of the Church. This new relationship, this new life is to be expressed in their family relationships. It is to be of mutual service.<sup>19</sup>

"They are all to regard themselves as servants of one Master, whose interests must be dearer to them than their own. The fear of Christ is to keep them helpful and considerate to each other."

Christian marriage, then, is likened to Christ's relation to the Church:-

"Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also (though he is the Saviour of the body) is the head of the Church; as the Church is subject to Christ, so wives are to be subject to their husbands in every respect. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her.....so ought husbands to love their wives -- to love them as their own bodies (he who loves his wife loves himself)...."<sup>20</sup>

Christ as Head of the Church is in no way selfish or domineering; therefore the husband as head of the wife stands in the same relation. The relation of the Church to Christ represents a submission in which there is unity, sympathy, and understanding. Connotations of the word submission may not be pleasing in

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19. E. F. Scott's N. T. Commentary on Eph. p 236.  
 20. Eph. 5:22-28 (Moffatt's Translation).

modern ears, but in Paul's use of the word, it is not objectionable. Submission does not mean servility. Rather the real social implication of this passage signifies perfect harmony and unity on the part of both husband and wife.

In fact, R. W. Dale<sup>21</sup> thinks that Paul imposes a greater obligation upon the husband than the wife. "'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it'; the love is to be large, free, faithful, patient and generous, like the love of Christ for those whom He has redeemed; and like the love of Christ it is to be ready to accept the last extremities of self-sacrifice. The devotion of 'subjection' which Paul requires from wives is a devotion corresponding to that of the Church to Christ; the devotion of love which he requires from husbands is a devotion corresponding to that of Christ to the Church, a devotion which did not shrink from the shame and sharp agonies of the cross. In the presence of a devotion like this, a wife will have no occasion to think of personal rights; she will receive more than she can claim."

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21. R. W. Dale, Lectures on the Ephesians,  
p 356.



There is a social implication here which most writers seem to overlook. If a minister should instruct the young woman he is about to marry that the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, and that the wife is to love and cherish her husband as the Church loves Christ, he would be saying the very thing which Paul was trying to convey to the Ephesian Christians. One can hardly imagine any better advice or working principle which could be higher or more practical than that which Paul has given here.

The same ideas are set forth in shorter form in his epistle to the Colossians.<sup>22</sup> It can be clearly seen that Paul is setting forth teaching for the family relationships which imply a complete social change which will eventually affect society as a whole. It has been pointed out<sup>23</sup> that the Christian conception of the family was in no small degree an inheritance from Judaism which emphasised the care and development of the natural affections. The family was a sacred unit in Hebrew history.

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22. Col. 3:18-4:1.

23. E. F. Scott, N. T. Commentary, p 77.

"But while Jesus took over the Jewish conception He deepened and purified it by His new law of marriage. Still more He changed all relations within the family by His insistence on the rights of every human personality and by the new meaning which He gave to fatherhood and brotherhood."<sup>24</sup>

Paul was only working out the social implication of this principle in a practical manner when he insisted on mutual service and equal regard for one another "in Christ."

When Paul passes on to the subject of children, he addresses both parents and children in the same way. The same spirit, the same reciprocal duties are emphasised.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord."<sup>25</sup>

Thus children are to obey their parents for this will be pleasing to the Lord. Parents are to avoid exasperating their children. This would avoid nagging and fault-finding which must have been a problem of sufficient intensity to call forth Paul's remarks on

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24. E. F. Scott, Op. Cit. p 78.  
25. Eph. 6:1-4.

the subject. Paul recognises the necessity of discipline, but he is also concerned about the temper of the parents. There is to be a "sweet reasonableness" prevailing in a Christian home. Both parents and children are to practise the Christian spirit.

Since divorce and separation were such prevalent practices in the Roman world,<sup>26</sup> Paul gives some thought and consideration to the subject. Here again there is no complete or systematic treatment of the problem. His remarks are mostly answers to questions which have arisen in the Corinthian church. "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me."<sup>27</sup>

In the Corinthian church, where the converts were drawn from various racial and social strata, there existed -- apart from Christianity -- no high or uniform standard of conception, usage, or custom with regard to questions connected with marriage and divorce. In the marriages of the Jews and the Greeks, love had, as a rule, although not always, little to do with the union. Marriage was arranged by the parents of the contracting parties. For the Jews marriage was a duty and any one who was past the age of twenty

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26. Cf. chapter on The Social World of Paul p 34.  
 27. I Cor. 7:1.

and not married had sinned. No doubt there were some who would be influenced by the ideal of celibacy, although celibacy seems to be out of keeping with the general Greek point of view; but not all of a people share fully the general traits, and in Corinth especially the population was not pure Greek but mixed. However, even the Greek mind gives a background for an ascetic trend. C. H. Moore says, "Plato, you remember, emphasized the conflict of flesh and spirit, and we have seen how the Stoics, for all their monistic theory, came finally to the same dualism. Closely connected with this point of view was the contempt for the world of the senses which these schools show. This was due to a development of the Platonic doctrines of matter and of the descent of souls into corporeal dwellings; these teachings in their turn led to a confirmation of the belief that the ascetic life was the proper one for the philosopher -- a doctrine which had been held in considerable degree by the Stoics and cynics."<sup>28</sup> With this ascetic trend and the fact of such a mixed population with contrasting views of marriage, there were bound to be conflicting views on divorce and general confusion in the minds of the early Christians.

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28. C. H. Moore, The Religious Thought of the Greeks p 208.

In the age of Cicero marriage had already lost what idealistic standing it had attained and divorce had become a common practice even in the high social circles. Almost all the well-known ladies of that period had become divorced at least once. "Pompey, though a man of excellent character, was married five times, Caesar four times, Cicero three times, and under the Empire Pliny the Younger three times."<sup>29</sup> There was no difficulty in securing a divorce. Sometimes the man asked for it, sometimes the woman; it was sought without real motive and for the slightest reason. It was considered a private matter, and either party could send the other notice of it without warning or without the registering of some official complaint. In Schmidt's book,<sup>30</sup> "The Social Results of Early Christianity," he tells of a Roman questioned by his friends why he had put away his wife, who was young, rich, and beautiful. The man pointed out his shoe and said, "You see this is new and beautiful; no one knows, however, where it pinches me."

The Greeks were no better in their practices. The husband's power of annulment was unfettered by law

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29. W. Warde Fowler in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VIII, p 466.

30. Page 48-9.

or rigid customs. He simply sent the woman back to her father's house with her dowry. The possession of the dowry was about the only protection which the woman had. Adultery on the part of the husband was not always considered a sufficient cause for divorce.<sup>31</sup>

When we turn to the Jewish ideas of divorce, we might expect the Jewish converts to Christianity to have a much better background and tradition. There was the social obligation to marry as has already been noted. This was based on Genesis 9:7, "be ye fruitful and multiply," and ancient Rabbinic (Tannaitic) prescriptions.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless divorce was a prevalent practice among the Jews, although the right of the wife to divorce her husband, which was common among the Greeks and Romans, was an idea repugnant to Hebrew customs and traditions. Nevertheless, in the semi-Hellenized sections of Palestinian society, such as the Herodian house, we find women taking the initiative and divorcing husbands.<sup>33</sup>

T. W. Manson<sup>34</sup> points out that "Mk. 10:12 flatly

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31. Cf. W. J. Woodhouse, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VIII, p 448.

32. Yebhamoth, 62b, 63b, 64a.

33. Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People, First Division, Vol. II p 22f.

34. T. W. Manson, The Mission and Message of Jesus - 428.

contradicts Jewish Law, in which the wife could not divorce her husband. In certain cases (not including infidelity on his part) she could compel him to divorce her; but in Jewish law it is not proper to speak of a wife divorcing her husband. It is true that in two early Aramaic Jewish documents from Elephantine (Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C., e.d. Cowley, Nos. 9 and 15) divorce of the husband by the wife is a legal possibility; but the community in Elephantine was eccentric in other respects and can hardly be cited as an example of orthodox Jewish practice."

The Jewish law of divorce had a long history and was based upon Deuteronomy 24:1-4a:-

"When a man hath a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife...."

This Deuteronomic code acknowledged the husband's right of divorce and was intended to guard against its abuse. It limits the cases in which a husband may act, and it also binds him by the consequences of his act. He may not resume his divorced wife at a later

time. There is a sense in which the woman is protected also for "if the woman were simply dismissed, her lot would be hard, indeed; for no other man would dare to take her into his household, and she is therefore to be provided with a separation-notice, or certificate, stating that she is no longer claimed by her husband and is therefore under no obligation or tie to him. It is therefore possible for any other man to take possession of her without infringing the rights of a former owner, and he can use her in a fashion which would have exposed him to the penalty of adultery if she had still been the property of some one else. No misfortune is so justly dreaded in the East as to be an unattached woman, and the purpose of the provision is to enable her to find a fresh home and a new place in the community."<sup>35</sup>

By the time of Jesus and Paul there was a dispute between the rival Pharisaic schools of Shammai and Hillel. The school of Shammai was interpreting this Deuteronomic law to mean that no one shall divorce his wife unless there shall have been found in her some unchastity, since it is written, because he hath found the nakedness of a thing in her. The school of Hillel

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35. Robinson, The Gospel of Matthew, p 15ff.



went so far as to allow a man to divorce his wife for almost any cause, even if she burned his food in cooking or if he found some one who was fairer.<sup>36</sup>

When Jesus was confronted with this dispute, he did not take sides with either school but put the whole subject on a higher plane. Asked for a ruling on the subject, He answers by stating the absolute Will of God on the subject.<sup>37</sup> "The bond between the pair lies in the nature of creation and is the work of Him who created them male and female from the beginning. It is therefore the very holiest thing in the physical life of man; and it is none other than God who has joined the two together and made them no longer separate but complementary parts of a single entity. That which they have given to one another is the most sacred thing they possess, and for either to bestow it on a third party is nothing less than sacrilege. The principle applies equally to both sexes; it is part of the supreme value of the teaching of Jesus on this subject that he refused to make any distinction between

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36. An account of this dispute is given in the Mishna (Gittin IX.-10).

37. Mark 10:2-12, Lk. 16:18. Comment is made on Matthew's reference (5:32, 19:3f) in footnote 39. Scholars consider Mark's source as primary.

the man and the woman. And for any human authority to step in and recognize the sacrilege formally and officially is to Jesus a horrible thing; and it is nothing less than the direct undoing of God's own work."<sup>38</sup>

Paul follows Jesus' teaching on the indissolubility of marriage.<sup>39</sup>

"For married people these are my instructions (and they are the Lord's not mine). A wife is not to separate from her husband -- if she has separated, she must either remain single or be reconciled to him -- and a husband must not put away his wife."<sup>40</sup>

When Paul passes on to deal with specific cases, he adds by way of parenthesis that the Lord is not

38. Robinson, op. cit. p 15ff.

39. Although the Gospels were not yet written, the words of our Lord as recorded in Mk. 10:2-12 must have been well-known as representing the teaching of our Lord on divorce. The fact that Paul follows Jesus' teaching on the indissolubility of marriage strengthens the position of Mark and Luke as over against Matthew's exception (except for fornication). Robinson in his N. T. Commentary on Matthew, points out that this exception recorded by Matthew was not in his source. Mark's account is considered primary. Rawlinson in his Westminster Commentary on Mark, suggests that Matthew modifies the sense of our Lord's words so as to represent Him as having merely taken sides in a current rabbinical dispute.

40. I Cor. 7:10-11 (Moffatt's Translation).

speaking but it is himself, (I Cor. 7:12). Some of the Corinthian Christians seem to have believed that because they were new creatures in Christ their old former relationships in respect to marriage should be broken; and they put to Paul the vexing question whether a believing man who had an unbelieving wife ought not to forsake her. Paul not only felt this to be utterly contrary to the mind of Christ, but was wise enough to see that if a Christian should divorce his wife on the sole ground that he was a Christian, this easy method of divorce might lead to a large and unwelcome influx of pretended Christians into the church.<sup>41</sup> He therefore lays down the general principle that the power of separation is to rest with the unbelieving and not with the believing partner.

"But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: if any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is ~~not~~ under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."<sup>42</sup>

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41. Dods, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, page 173f.

42. I Cor. 7:39-40-45

As these last two verses indicate, there is always a chance that the unbelieving one shall be converted. An additional reason for not divorcing is that Christian privileges might be denied the children. The sanctity of the Christian family is discussed elsewhere, but in this connection it is interesting to recall that the Westminster Confession (VIII, 2.) put it in the form that the children of Christians are "federally holy" before baptism and are therefore to be baptized. When it came to second marriages, Paul does not recommend them but would allow them provided the second party were a Christian (I Cor. 7:39ff).

"Granted then that marriage is not only a legitimate function, but a useful, honourable, and sacred institution," Cadoux asks,<sup>43</sup> "what are its nature and duties?" Its aim, according to Paul, is the regulation and confinement within due limits of the physical function of sex (Rom. 1:27; I Cor. 7:2, 9, 36; I Thess. 4:3ff). Unnatural departures from that function formed the great blot on Gentile morals (Rom. 1:26f): but even short of such extreme excess there was ample scope for that sinful abuse

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43. Cadoux, Op. Cit. p 125.

which, in the forms of concubinage, prostitution, adultery, and even at times of incest, constituted so melancholy a characteristic of pagan life, and against which the Christian was continually warned (Acts 15:20,29; 21:25. I Thess. 4:5. I Cor. 6:9-11. Rom. 1:24, 28f; 6:19. Eph. 2:2f; 4:17-20, 22; 5:3-5, 11f. Col. 3:5-7). The sexual act unites man and woman in an inviolable bond, so that even intercourse with a prostitute imposes the duty of permanent union (I Cor. 6:16). In regard to the intercourse between married people, there must be mutual cession of conjugal dues, compliance with each other's wishes, temporary abstinence by agreement for purpose of prayer, and freedom from incontinence." (I Cor. 7:3-6. I Thess. 4:5).

For a final estimate of the status of women, we can turn to the place which Paul actually gave to them in his own ministry. This should off-set the influence of any negative teaching or seeming inconsistency which might arise from a rapid perusal of certain scriptural passages, or any doubt that might continue to linger in the mind. As a matter of fact, the social implications of his statement to the Galatians that "All are one in Christ Jesus," are

demonstrated by the equal position and high honour in which Paul actually placed women in the early Church.

At Philippi there was Lydia.<sup>44</sup> Chloe<sup>45</sup> is the one who furnishes Paul <sup>with</sup> the information about the conditions of the Church in Corinth. No doubt some of the women who helped Paul were women of wealth and means. Priscilla<sup>46</sup> is sometimes mentioned first before her husband, and Phoebe<sup>47</sup> was intrusted with an important epistle. This is of sufficient significance to cause Albert G. MacKinnon to say:-<sup>48</sup>

"When Paul needed a King's Messenger, he chose a woman. That should dispose of the calumny against this Apostle that he under-rated the position of women in the Church. He did the very reverse: he honoured and confided in them. Who of all the disciples would have been so modern as to say: 'There is neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus?'

"His acts were as daring as his speech. He entrusted to a woman's care a treasure which was to mean more to the world than even he or she could ever have dreamed of. The liberty of the twentieth century depended on the fidelity of that letter-carrier; our present civilisation owes more to Phoebe than it has ever realised. Were she to have lost that package, one of the greatest inspirations in history would have been lost....we are impressed with the fact that for this important

44. Acts 16:14, 15, 40.

45. I Cor. 1:11.

46 Rom. 16:3. I Cor. 16:19.

47. Rom. 16:1-2.

48. MacKinnon, The Rome of St. Paul, p 145.

duty a woman was chosen."

Phoebe is called a sister or deaconess as the Revised Version and Moffatt have it, which indicates the equality of her position in the community. Of the important list of names in the sixteenth chapter of Roman, one-third are women.

This high place of honour and equality would not necessarily be strange to Judaism for Israel had its women heroes, Miriam and Deborah. The thirty-first chapter of Proverbs was a very important tribute to women; in Jesus' time we notice that the disciples wondered at Jesus because he talked to a woman at Sychar.

In Greece the free-born wife was practically confined to her household and rarely mingled in public affairs. Those who did exert an influence over the men were courtesans. The oriental idea of seclusion of women was prevalent.<sup>49</sup>

The Roman wife exerted a greater power, but she was still subject to her husband. She was capable of heroic virtue, but the highest tribute was, "She abode in her home and spun the wool."<sup>50</sup>

49. Foakes-Jackson, The Life of St. Paul, p 336.

50. Foakes-Jackson, Op. Cit. p 336.

A movement<sup>51</sup> which we would not call the emancipation of woman was stirring the early Christian communities. It calls forth some passages difficult<sup>52</sup> to understand, and yet if we could transport ourselves back into the social world of Paul, we might see the necessity for the rule of wearing the veil. Paul did not want the Christian convert to be classed as a pagan. Paul did not want the Christian women to be likened to the women of the pagan temples.

It is to be noted in the fifth verse of the eleventh chapter of Corinthians that Paul does not forbid woman to speak or prophesy if her head was covered, but when we come to <sup>vers 34-36</sup> (the last three) verses of the fourteenth chapter, women are forbidden to speak in the gatherings of the church. It is even called a disgrace.

Anderson Scott<sup>53</sup> thinks definitely that this passage was not written by Paul, but added. He goes on to say, "that he (Paul) should here condemn a practice which in 11:5 he has mentioned without

51. Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, p 182.

52. I Cor. 11:3-16.

53. Anderson Scott, N. T. Ethics, p 126.

Footnotes to St. Paul, p 122.

Christianity According to St. Paul, p 227.



criticism is hardly to be believed. At the same time the textual authorities disagree as to the position of the passage, several MSS. placing it after verse 40. Such disagreement is one of the surest signs of later insertion. The probability is that in the first enthusiasm the emancipation of women went too far or too fast, and that reaction followed, of which these verses, inserted by another hand, together with I Tim. 2:12 are the evidence."

Foakes-Jackson points out<sup>54</sup> that Paul's appeal to Old Testament scripture about woman being created for the glory of man is to convince Paul's female correspondents not of their inferiority, but of the necessity of their observing proper modesty and decorum in worship.

It must be reiterated that if some of the counsels of Paul to meet particular problems be confusing or misleading, one must turn to his teaching in its entirety and also see the actual place Paul gave to women in his ministry in order to see the full force of the social implications.

"Without women's help, Christianity could never

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54. Foakes-Jackson, Op. Cit. p 337-38.

have penetrated into the secluded households of the Mediterranean seaboard, and we have but to read the list of those whom Paul salutes in his Epistles to see the absurdity of accusing him of a narrow prejudice against employing the help of women in the furtherance of the Gospel. Lydia, Phoebe, Priscilla and many others rise up to protest against such distortion of the Apostle's motives."<sup>55</sup>

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55. Foakes-Jackson, Op. Cit. p 340.

## CHAPTER V

### PAUL AND THE STATE

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Whatever might be written or said about this question of Paul's attitude toward the State, it would be unfair to say that he had no interest in world affairs and particularly in his relationship to the Roman State.<sup>1</sup> Even those who emphasise the purely theological and individual aspects of his thought, his otherworldliness, his apocalyptic hope, cannot ignore Romans 13.

"Though Paul's ethic is in certain directions deeply affected by his belief in the nearness of the end and the consequent transference of his interest from earth to heaven, it is emphatically a social ethic and singularly free from anything like self-centered individualism and otherworldliness. Where his apocalyptic outlook has left the deepest marks is naturally in his valuation of the institutions and goods of the existing age or order. With respect to the State, it would be untrue to say that his attitude toward it is one of indifference."<sup>2</sup>

He does not enter into any elaborate discussion of the question. He does not present any metaphysical, economic, or political theory of the State. He does not discuss the functions or duties of the State. He does not set forth rules for citizenship, nor

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1. Romans 13:1-10.

2. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, p 185.

does he ignore the subject. All authority is of God. Existent rulers are servants of God. In maintaining order and punishing the wicked, <sup>ruler</sup> ~~he~~ <sup>is</sup> a minister of God for good. He arouses no terror in the good man. In punishing the wicked and the disobedient, he is doing God's work. His authority for such action comes ultimately from God. Believers and men in general are under obligation to submit to such authority and to pay their taxes. Honour, respect, and most of all, love are the attitudes which a Christian is to have towards his fellow citizen.

Paul's position was also advocated by earlier writers. In Wisdom (6:1) we find, "Give ear, ye kings, and understand; your power was given unto you by the Lord, and your dominion by the Most High"; and in Enoch 46:5, "He will put down the kings from the thrones...because they do not thankfully acknowledge when the kingdom was bestowed upon them."

Even though Paul was a good Roman citizen and proud of his citizenship, he was not patriotic towards the Roman government in the same way in which an Englishman or Scotsman would be patriotic towards his country. He was primarily a Jew and grateful for the beneficent power and protection of the Roman

government.

Wilson<sup>3</sup> points out that all Jews of the Diaspora had abundant reason for being grateful to the Roman power. They were not asked to pay taxes in the sabbatical year. Jewish soldiers were exempt from military service on their sabbath and special festival days. They were allowed to have their own food just as they would at home where the Jews maintained their own markets, supervised by their own officials. They had freedom of worship and protection of their property rights. Julius Caesar had guaranteed this right and his immediate successors continued the practice. They were permitted to pray, chant, worship, read their sacred books, have their own community chest, and spend the money as they saw fit. They had the privilege of pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They had their own elementary schools and were freed from having to repeat the official pagan oath. As a citizen of Tarsus, Paul grew up in this political atmosphere and, no doubt, acquired therefrom his benevolent attitude toward the Roman State. Sir William Ramsay<sup>4</sup> thinks Paul has never really been

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3. Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism, p 137f.

4. Ramsay, Pauline and Other Studies, p 55.

studied enough from his Roman side.

There was some difference between Palestinian Judaism and the Judaism of the Diaspora which may have accounted in part for Paul's liberal attitude to the State. The Palestinian Jews were never really loyal, grateful, obedient subjects of the Empire. In spite of the special privileges which have been mentioned, like exemption from military service and right of worship, there was nothing which atoned for the forfeiture of their independence. Besides, all the blessings which Rome brought were not good in the eyes of the Palestinian Jews. With her peace, power, and wealth came corruption, pride, slavery, tribute, oppression, Greek vice, theatrical, and gladiatorial shows. And worst of all, there was the constant threat of idolatry and possible desecration of the sanctities of Jehovah. Herod the Great, who could be considered a splendid king from a certain point of view, was tolerated by the Pharisees only because he was a little better than a Roman governor. There was a traditional hatred for anything which was non-Jewish. The Jews had developed a code of legislation which was to keep them separate from the pagan world. This legislation was interpreted by the Rabbis for the

purpose of keeping the Jews from being led unwittingly into idolatry: Jews were to avoid all participation in idolatry; to refrain from aiding the heathen in their worship. The Mishnah goes so far as to forbid aid to a non-Jewish mother with child in order that there might not be another child brought up in idolatry.<sup>5</sup> The worst crimes were imputed to the Romans. "It was not safe to leave cattle in their (the Romans') charge, to allow their women to nurse infants, or their physicians to attend the sick, nor to walk in their company, without taking precautions against sudden and unprovoked attacks. They should, so far as possible, be altogether avoided, except in cases of necessity or for the sake of business. They and theirs were defiled; their houses unclean, as containing idols or things dedicated to them; their feasts, their joyous occasions, their very contact, were polluted by idolatry; and there was no security, if a heathen were left alone in a room, that he might not, in wantonness or by carelessness, defile the wine or meat on the table, or the oil and wheat in the store. Under such circumstances, therefore, every-one

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5. Cf. Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. I, p 91.



must be regarded as having been rendered unclean. Three days before a heathen festival (according to some, also three days after) every business transaction with them was prohibited, for fear of giving either help or pleasure. Jews were to avoid passing through a city where there was an idolatrous feast -- nay, they were not even to sit down within the shadow of a tree dedicated to idol-worship. Its wood was polluted; if used in baking, the bread was unclean; if a shuttle had been made of it, not only was all cloth woven on it forbidden, but if such had been inadvertently mixed with other pieces of cloth, or a garment made from it placed with other garments, the whole became unclean. Jewish workmen were not to assist in building basilicas, nor stadia, nor places where judicial sentences were pronounced by heathen. Of course, it was not lawful to let houses or fields, nor to sell cattle to them. Milk drawn by a heathen, if a Jew had not been present to watch it, bread and oil prepared by them, were unlawful. Their wine was wholly interdicted -- the mere touch of a heathen polluted a whole cask; nay, even to put one's nose to heathen wine was strickly prohibited."<sup>6</sup> Details

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6. Edersheim, Op. Cit. p 92.

like these could be multiplied, but they are sufficient for us to realise how far Paul had gone in his emancipation from the traditional hatred of the Gentile world and the Romans in particular.

Paul was not alone in his emancipation for nearly all of the Jews of the Diaspora were affected by their environment and became more tolerant in their attitude towards the Romans and the Greeks. At first they carried on only business relations with the Gentiles, but it was not long until the high culture of the Greeks exerted its influence. Jews like Philo could not read the Greek poets and philosophers such as Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno without their having a far-reaching influence upon their intellectual and religious life. In spite of the Jewish adherence to a legal Judaism, their conception of life and the world was influenced by Greek culture. Although the syncretistic philosophy never gained the upper hand, adherence to the law was not taken in the literal sense in which the Pharisaic party of Jerusalem taught it. Although religious life was directed by the law of Moses, habitual intercourse with a people so advanced in civilisation could not fail to have its effect.<sup>6a</sup> There was a sense in which they became

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6a. Dict. of Ap. Church, Vol. I, p 304-6.

captivated by the freedom and range of the Greek thought which could not be said of the Palestinian Jews.

Hans Lietzmann in his book<sup>7</sup> emphasises the changing character of the Judaism of the Diaspora. He says, "In spite of all the liveliness of its intercourse with Jerusalem and all its common feeling, Judaism of the Diaspora had inwardly assumed in the course of history, another character than that of the people of the native land. This was most strikingly instanced by the fact that they had forgotten the language of Palestine, and accepted the Greek of every-day use."

Greek was the common language in Palestine also, but it had a more far-reaching effect outside of Jerusalem. Only the Rabbis outside of Palestine had any real knowledge of Hebrew and there is no way of knowing how extensive their knowledge was and how many there were. Deissmann<sup>7a</sup> tells about the discovery of a door post of a synagogue in Corinth on which stands the name of the congregation: "Synagogue of the Hebrews." But these Hebrews did not speak Hebrew for the inscription was in Greek.

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7. The Beginnings of the Christian Church, p 112f.  
7a. Light from the Ancient East.

The Jews of the Diaspora recognised in the Greek philosophical and ethical ideas a manifestation of the Divine Wisdom. There was thus evolved a tendency to tone down what was repellent in Judaism in order to bring their faith into harmony with the Greek mind. "Illustrations of this tendency are found in the Prophetic and Wisdom literature, in the modification of the Old Testament anthropomorphism by the Septuagint, in the serious attempt of Philo to find the philosophy of Plato and the Stoics in the narratives of Genesis by the method of allegorical interpretation. The Septuagint itself was the outcome of the keen desire to make their religion understood, as well as to guard and preserve it from influences hostile to it."<sup>7b</sup>

Even a partial adoption of Greek culture enabled the Jews to exert an influence on their pagan environment. They carried on a vigorous and partially successful missionary campaign to win new converts to Judaism. As they went out communicating the spiritual principles of their faith, they became more spiritual themselves. Those who accepted their faith were either formally received into their synagogues by the rite of

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7b. Dict. of Ap. Church, Vol. I, p 304-6

circumcision or the new proselytes formed a sort of an appendage to the Jewish communities as "God-fearing" people. The very fact that there were numerous Gentile converts in the synagogues in the time of Paul meant that the Jews of the Diaspora had developed a more tolerant attitude.

Although Jesus may not have shown any special affection for the Roman Empire, yet there is no doubt about Jesus' attitude on this question. All were children of the Heavenly Father, and Paul accepts that principle for his teaching and treatment of others.

Sanday and Headlam<sup>8</sup> believe that the true relations of Christianity to the civil power as laid down by Jesus, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's," are paralleled by Paul's statement in Romans thirteen and verse seven in particular, "Pay them all their respective dues, tribute to one, taxes to another, respect to this man, honour to that," (Moffatt's Translation). "At any rate, starting from this idea he (Paul) works out the principles which must lie at the basis of Christian politics,

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8. Sanday and Headlam, International Critical Commentary on Romans, p 371.

that the State is divinely appointed, or permitted by God; that its end is beneficent; and that the spheres of Church and State are not identical."<sup>9</sup>

Weiss<sup>10</sup> in comparing Paul's and Jesus' attitude towards the State sees little religious and patriotic favour towards the prince that governed Jesus' own country. From Mark 10:44 he indicates the accepted attitude towards the rulers as oppressors and tyrants, and he cannot see any deep emotion arising from Mark 12:17. "Jesus certainly showed no desire to encourage the revolutionary intrigues of the zealots; but His disinclination was not the outcome of innate conservatism and love of order, but of the conviction that attempts to secure the sovereignty of God by force of arms were impious (Mt. 11:2). His words can only be construed as implying complete indifference to that which is honoured with the title βασιλεία in this age. Jesus does not need to break His connection with His native land, for the glory of the palace of Tiberias has paled when the first rays of God's sovereignty appeared above the horizon. Paul has long before broken with the world, and yet can recog-

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9. Sanday and Headlam, *ibid.* p 371.

10. Weiss, Paul and Jesus, p 63.

nize high moral value in the institutions of the world."<sup>11</sup>

Manson in his book on Christ's view of the Kingdom of God makes an important distinction between the modern social thought of the State with its claims of power and right and Jesus' thought with which Paul's thought is also in accord.

"Modern social and political thought starts with the State, and with the State's claims of power and right. Christ starts with God, His Kingdom, His claims. His teaching necessarily moves among the highest universals, and leaves out of sight the temporary, shifting conditions under which the life of man is socially organized. But Christ certainly recognized the claims of the State within their own proper limits (Mk. 12:17, also Mt. 5:41). A certain sympathy is always necessary with the State in its effort to moralize, however crudely, the general life of the community and to carry the mass of men with it. But we cannot, for that reason, allow a distinction to be drawn in principle between State morality and the Christian ethic. The Christian law is the ideal towards which the life of the State must ever tend, the far off shining light to which its course must be shaped. Inasmuch, however, as the State is hampered by the peculiar conditions of its task, and the legislation which it provides is always of the nature of a compromise, a spiritual society must exist by the side of it which shall realise within itself that higher ideal of moral obligation which the State cannot enforce (Mt. 5:46-48, 22:25-28, 22:21). We may say that from this point of view the specific Christian ethic begins where the ethic of the State leaves off. But the

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11. Weiss, *ibid.* p 63.

outposts of the State ideal ought to be continually advancing. There is no ultimate line of demarcation between its morality and that of the Kingdom of God.

"On the other hand no dynamic of social and political progress in the world is comparable to the Christian morality. It contains within itself the principle which abolishes all the evils under which the organized social life of mankind, labours, oppression, war, injustice, poverty, all remediable suffering.....His ideal is nothing less than a redeemed humanity, a new creation, realizing under the social conditions of its existence all the blessedness which saints and prophets have associated with Heaven and this ideal we must never forget."<sup>12</sup>

Cadoux<sup>13</sup> is also in agreement with most writers that whatever the early Christians believed on the subject of the State, they regarded it as an interpretation of Jesus' teaching. He does point out, it is true, a certain dualism in Jesus' attitude to the State which was not necessarily contradictory. Jesus both approved of the State and disapproved of it. "In both cases the judgment was both absolute and relative. Of the benevolent activities of the State, His approval would have been absolute. Of its crimes and abuses, His disapproval was equally so. As to its attempt to restrain crime and foster morality by the

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12. Manson, Christ's View of the Kingdom of God, p 119-20.

13. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World, p 97-115.



use of physical coercion and penalties, His position embraced approval and disapproval, both being relative -- the former, to the unenlightenment and spiritual immaturity of the governors in question -- the latter, to the standpoint of Himself and His followers. He regarded it as obedience to Satan to use violent methods Himself, and He definitely forbade His followers to use them either in a private or in a public capacity. As a means of checking wrongdoing, He substituted self-sacrificing love, and a willingness to risk temporary failure in the particular case for the sake of ultimate triumph. His expectation of this triumph involved therefore an expectation of the disappearance, sooner or later, of all governments founded on force. We do not indeed find that the attitude of Jesus to the State was invariably or fully understood in this light by early Christians; but its essential dualism (based on subjective differences in the two classes of agents concerned) is reflected not only in the thought of the period we have now to study, but in that of the whole pre-Constantinian era. Christian thought and feeling toward the State always sway between the two extremes of absolute condemnation and rejection on the

one hand, and hearty approval and even co-operation on the other."<sup>14</sup>

Paul's attitude towards the State can be noted in other places besides the one already mentioned in Romans 13. In Acts 19 we have the account of the affair with the silversmiths in Ephesus. This incident reveals that there was no legal attempt to force Christians to accept emperor worship or the State religion, nor did Paul consider the attitude of the people of such a nature that it was improper to have friendly contact with them. We also get a glimpse at the high esteem in which Paul and the others held the Roman constitution.

No doubt Paul's favourable attitude towards the Roman State could be traced to his own personal experiences. Just as many modern travelers in Palestine to-day have a sense of security and express appreciation for the protection of the British Mandate, so Paul who had travelled from Antioch to Asia Minor often in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in cold and nakedness, would gladly show his appreciation for the governing power which made and guarded the

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14. Cadoux, Op. Cit. p 97.

roads, preserved the peace, wrought justice, and punished the evil-doers.

"Any one who, like Paul, had repeatedly enjoyed the protection of the officials against the mob, would naturally regard the supporters of law and order as allies rather than as hostile to his work. But these facts are hardly enough to explain the high idealism apparent in Romans 13:7ff. The State is there regarded as *κατέχων*, as averting the entrance of corruption and decay. This view may be regarded as the outcome of personal experience; but the powers that be are also regarded as the servants of God for good, and such a statement is only possible for a writer who not only shuts his eyes to many disagreeable facts, but also finds some divine element for reverence within the State. In Paul's case this attitude is to be explained as due to more than tradition (Wisdom 6:4 where kings are called *ὀπρῆται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ*); it is the outcome of the true Graeco-Roman spirit which remained with Paul in spite of his renunciation of the world and his preaching of repentance. Revolution or antagonism to the State Paul regarded as sin against God, just as tumult, uproar, and disorder are hateful. God is not a God of *ἀκαταστασία* but a God of peace; everything is to proceed *εὐοκνημόρως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν* (I Cor. 14:33, 40). This characteristic expression is the outcome of the Roman desire for discipline and drill."<sup>15</sup>

Thus far we have noted Paul's general loyalty to the State, his emancipation from the old Jewish prejudice, his apparent approval of the powers that be, and his ethical harmony with Jesus' attitude towards the State. But any real treatment of this

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15. Weiss, Paul and Jesus, p 63f.

subject would not be complete which does not point out certain conditions and attitudes which seem to be below the surface. There was an underlying antipathy to the State because it was pagan and non-Christian. There was a great gulf between good and evil, light and darkness, Christian and non-Christian. He even warns the Christians at Corinth<sup>16</sup> about taking their legal cases before pagan magistrates. Even though Paul had emancipated himself from the old Jewish prejudice against the Roman Empire, it is doubtful whether all the Jews who were baptised into the Christian faith were cleansed of that age-long hatred of Roman authority. Because so many of the early converts to Christianity came from the poorer classes where there were many inequalities and injustices, one would naturally expect at least an underground current of feeling against the existing order of things.<sup>17</sup>

Taking into consideration all of these underlying factors, one would conjecture as Sanday and Headlam do suggest,<sup>18</sup> that there was some definite

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16. I Cor. 6:1.

17. Cadoux emphasizes this point in his treatment of the subject.

18. Sanday and Headlam, *Op. Cit.* p 370.

antipathy towards the Roman State or some action which caused Paul to write as he did. We do have the references in Acts 18 where Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, who were refugees from Rome with other Jews because of an edict by Claudius. At least we know that Paul was not in the habit of writing in the air, and there must have been some social situation which he was trying to meet and solve in the Christian spirit.

There seems to be no definite indication in Paul's time of any resistance to persecution by force. About as far as a Christian goes is to lash the authorities with his tongue. So Stephen does in Acts 7:51-54, but a few moments later when he is being stoned to death, he says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." In Acts 23:3 Paul lashes an authority with his tongue; but when he discovers that he is an High Priest, he apologises. Once when Peter and John were forbidden by the Sanhedrin to speak or teach any more about Christ, they replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."<sup>19</sup> Peter and the

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19. Acts 4:19-20.

apostles make a statement at another time which is even stronger: "One must obey God rather than men."<sup>20</sup>

Not only was there no physical resistance to the State in Paul's time, but he definitely recognises that punishment and vengeance belong to God. Even though the pagan might be used of God to punish an evil-doer, Paul very definitely forbids the Christian this privilege. "Render to no man evil for evil... avenge not yourselves beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, 'Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense,' saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."<sup>21</sup>.

In Paul's teaching we see not only a willing obedience to the State but a recognition that, as Cadoux<sup>22</sup> points out, "The State was given a certain relative validity of its own." The utter depravity of the pagan world was not strictly held to. Even though all had sinned (Jew and Gentile) and fallen

20. Acts 5:29.

21. Rom. 12:17-21..

22. Cadoux, Op. Cit, p 109

short of the glory of God,<sup>23</sup> the Jews had been given special spiritual privileges. ~~The~~ political institutions had been recognised as legitimate. The Judges and Kings of Israel were Divinely appointed. We have already noted Paul's apology to the High Priest which would imply a recognition of authority. There was some good in the Gentiles also. By the light of nature they had some sense of duty<sup>24</sup> and knew something of the Will of God. In Acts 25:16 Paul mentions their sense of justice and fair-play, the love of law and order. "The Rulers are not a terror to good work, but to evil."<sup>25</sup> "Paul had no hesitation in insisting on his rights as a Roman citizen,<sup>26</sup> in accepting the protection of the Roman soldiers,<sup>27</sup> in informing the Roman officer of the plot against his life,<sup>28</sup> and in appealing to the Emperor when he feared that he could not otherwise obtain the acquittal that was his due."<sup>29</sup>

It is not difficult for us to see, then, why Paul felt that "the powers that be are ordained of

23. Rom. 3:23.

24. Rom. 1:19f; 2:14f.

25. Rom. 13:3f.

26. Acts 16:35ff; 21:39; 22:23-29.

27. Acts 21:31ff; 23:10-35.

28. Acts 23:14-22.

29. Acts 25:10-12, 21, 25; 26:32; 28:19.

Cadoux, Op. Cit. p 111.

God," but when he goes on to say, "for rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil,..."<sup>30</sup> C. A. Scott<sup>31</sup> believes that this opens the door for later criticism of the State. If the State should become a terror to the good as it did when it began its persecution of the Christians shortly after Paul's death, then the Christians would not have to bow their conscience or obey all the orders of the State. This justification of the State and approval of authority did not mean approval of any particular government as over against another. Government was a Divine institution, but the manifestation of it at some particular time might be evil. The servants of the government might be saints or devils. C. A. Scott<sup>32</sup> seems to be justified in his belief that Paul would

30. Romans 13:3-4.

31. C. A. Scott, Footnotes to St. Paul, p 60.

32. C. A. Scott, New Testament Ethics, p 137.



have reversed his statement ten years later in the light of the altered circumstances when the Empire became a persecutor and made compulsory the worship of the Emperor.

However, we cannot imagine Paul reversing his exhortation, "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law."<sup>33</sup> Even though conditions have changed since Paul's time and will probably continue to change, there is guidance in these words of Paul which are applicable now and will be of permanent value hereafter for those who see the social implications of his underlying principles and are willing to apply them to actual situations.

One writer<sup>34</sup> in visualising the social implication of Paul's teaching on the State for to-day, says:-

33. Romans 13:8-10.

34. Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism, p 262-3.

"If Paul were alive in the world of to-day, his message to men would probably be this: be a loyal citizen to, and obey the laws of the land in which you live. Try to live the life of one who is at once patriotic and under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, yet, with all your patriotism, do not forget the highest interests of the larger brotherhood of mankind throughout the world. Let your patriotism be a constructive patriotism, not only for the good of your own people, but for the good of the world. He would probably say that the world is not yet ripe for the realization of an international State....There is a principle, which, when universally accepted and applied, will logically lead to the establishment of one world-wide State, superior to all racial distinctions and antagonisms, and simply based on the Fatherhood of God and the Christian brotherhood of man."

## CHAPTER VI

### PAUL AND JESUS

## PAUL AND JESUS

The relation of Paul and Jesus is an important one. That there should be some difference is to be expected. Although it can be stated in the beginning as the result of this study, the differences are not to be found in the realm of the social, moral, or ethical, but rather in what could be called the strictly theological or doctrinal. It is to be expected that Paul would attach more meaning to the death of Jesus, to the cross and the life of the Spirit. Jesus is not only a guide, mediator, and example, but the object of veneration. It is natural that a doctrine of redemption and a Christology should be developed after the death of Jesus. There is some difference in their conception of the Law. The Mystical element seems to be emphasised more by Paul. With all the differences, it cannot be truthfully said that there are two gospels. They are essentially one and their oneness comes in their ethical, spiritual and social harmony. Since our thesis confines us to that which is social, we shall deal almost exclusively, then, with the agreements rather than the disagreements.

First and foremost comes the social principle

of love. The sole precept of Jesus which could in any sense be called a commandment and which is valid for all men, at all times, and in all circumstances, is this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Other precepts could be deduced from this. Paul seized upon this same principle and made it central in his teaching. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law." "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."<sup>1</sup> Christ lays emphasis upon the inner motive and the formal expression of religion must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,<sup>2</sup> and Paul lays emphasis on inward purity as well. If Christ insists that everyone is to be perfect even as the Heavenly Father is perfect,<sup>3</sup> Paul's idea is to present everyone unto the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ.<sup>4</sup> All Christians are to "abound in Love." Jesus says, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect;" Paul says, "Be ye imitators of God." Jesus says, "I am come to minister;" Paul says, "I am a slave of

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1. Rom. 13:8; Col. 3:4.

2. Matt. 5:20.

3. Matt. 5:48.

4. Eph. 4:13.

Christ." The truth is that if a portrait were drawn of an ideal Christian showing all the ethical and social virtues as revealed in the writings of Paul, and the same were done from the words of Jesus, there would be no distinct difference. "The fruit of the spirit," says Paul, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Paul's teaching harmonises with the Sermon on the Mount. <sup>C</sup>A. Scott says<sup>5</sup> that Paul may supplement, but he never contradicts Jesus. Johanness Weiss, in his little book on Paul and Jesus, points out that we not only have ethical harmony between the two, but the very personality of Jesus is reflected in Paul. "Never is Paul's language richer, warmer, or more enthusiastic than when he speaks of love, renunciation and unselfishness, of serving and bearing. It seems by no means an over-statement to say that in such passages as Romans XII., where Paul depicts love in all its forms, or in I Corinthians XIII., where he rises to lyric power in its praise, we not only have echoes of the words of Jesus (v. 14), but can see the reflection of His personality. I have in mind such passages as χαίρειν μετὰ χαϊρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαϊόντων, or the echo of the words, 'they

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5. A. Scott, N. T. Ethics, p 75.

have their reward,' in, 'though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and have not love....it profiteth me nothing.' However, the coincidences between special turns of phrasing are not the points at issue, but rather the fact that the characteristic which moved the apostle most profoundly, and for which he found a form of expression 'classical' and unrivalled, is precisely that which is most clearly and convincingly prominent in the picture of Jesus. In this respect Paul 'understood' Jesus inwardly, deeply, and correctly."<sup>6</sup>

There are some direct references by Paul to the words of the Lord. I Thessalonians 4:15 corresponds to Matthew 24:31; I Corinthians 7:10 corresponds to Mark 10:9; I Corinthians 9:14 to Luke 10:7; so also the institution of the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:24. The following comparison has also been made by various scholars:-<sup>7</sup>

Romans 12:14  
 εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς  
 διώκοντας ὑμᾶς  
 εὐλογεῖτε, καὶ μὴ  
 καταρᾶσθε.

Matt. 5:44  
 ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς  
 ἐχθρούς ὑμῶν, καὶ  
 προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ  
 τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς.

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6. J. Weiss, Paul and Jesus, p 121.  
 Cf. also, J. Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, Vol. 2, p 554f.  
 7. Sanday & Headlam, ICC on Romans, p 381.

Romans 13:7

ἀπόδοτε τὰς  
τὰς ὀφειλάς κ.τ.λ.

Romans 13:9

Καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα  
ἐντολή, ἐν τούτῳ  
τῷ λόγῳ ἀνακεφα-  
λαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ  
Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν  
πλησίον σου ὡς  
ἐαυτόν.

Matt. 22:21

ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ  
καίσαρος καίσαρι, καὶ  
τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ.

Matt. 22:39, 40.

Δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὕτη  
Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν  
πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν  
ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυοῖν  
ἐντολαῖς ὅλος ὁ νόμος  
κρέμαται καὶ οἱ  
προφῆται.

These verbal resemblances are few, but the identity in spirit and content are very remarkable. All that Paul says about revenge or injury inflicted on others is identical with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul's teaching on anger in Ephesians 4:26 corresponds to Jesus' attitude. When we look at the teaching of Paul as a whole, we see that Paul hardly ever borrows or uses the exact language of Jesus; yet there was no individual who so completely understood Him and manifested His Spirit.

Religion and morality were never separated by Jesus. Neither were they separated by Paul nor by the early Church as a whole. True religion and morality were indissolubly bound up together. The ethical form



is thought of as the law of God or Christ (Rom. 12:2, 7:22; I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:12). "Religion," says Paul in effect, "is not conformity to statutes, or non-conformity, but a spiritual relation to God expressed in the word 'faith' and an ethical attitude towards man, summed up in the word 'love' (Gal. 5:6). Morality he affirms, is not achieved by keeping rules, but by living in fellowship with the Spirit of God and in consequent love towards men, issuing in conduct that makes for their welfare (Gal. 5:16-23). Thus he makes religion personal rather than ecclesiastical, and morality a social relation grounded in religion. This is not a new doctrine. It had been announced by the prophets of Israel long before. Jesus taught it, but the idea had not become dominant. It was a novelty in the Graeco-Roman world. It has never been accepted wholeheartedly by any considerable portion of the Christian Church. It is not to-day the real creed of any great part of Christendom."<sup>8</sup> "There can be little doubt that, if St. Paul's ideal of the Christian religion were fulfilled, if the Christian religion and Christian morality were effectively realised, every

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8. Burton, Galatians, p LXIV.

Christian man would do the right thing under all conditions of life, just because he is a Christian."<sup>9</sup>

The fact that religion and morality are not separated does not detract in the least from the social implication of Jesus' or Paul's teaching, but enhances it. As a matter of fact, the social worker who tries to divorce social work from religion is cutting himself off from a life-giving source and fundamental motives which have promoted social welfare. And the minister or religious worker who divorces his thought and spirit from the social redemption of mankind ceases to be a true follower of Jesus or a correct interpreter of Paul. Paul fought a relentless war against those who would have developed the Christian religion into just another "sect type" which would be "purely spiritual." That would have been the end of the Christian movement as a transforming force in the world. "The true expression of the Christian spirit is not in private emotional delights, however rapturous or however showy, but in something less exciting but more valuable, intellectual sanity and moral fruitfulness (I Cor. 12-14)."<sup>10</sup> The fruits of the

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9. Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism, p 145.

10. Barry, Christianity and the New World, p 48.

Spirit are socially creative and have social implications for the individual and for society as a whole.

Both Paul and Jesus taught and lived in a time when the apocalyptic outlook was prominent. Although apocalyptic forms are to be found in both, their message remains independent of them. Manson in his book, Christ's View of the Kingdom of God,<sup>11</sup> says of Jesus' message, "It was in essence an expression of the urgency, immediacy, and inevitable triumph of God's will to reconcile the world to Himself. This agrees with the evidence of the Gospels where, although apocalyptic forms of expression abound, the emphasis is all upon the filial life and character, 'that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.' We may define the essence of Christianity, therefore, as the filial life toward God (Mt. 5:45,; John 1:12; I John 3:1-2) or, connecting it more closely with its source as the indwelling Christ, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. 1:27). This phrase of St. Paul, given its proper range and plenitude of meaning, covers all that the Master meant by the triumph of His Kingdom. Jesus sought the realization of the filial

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11. Manson, Christ's View of the Kingdom of God, p 174-5.

idea, not only in the individual, but in the corporate life of humanity. The Kingdom of God, in its Jewish sense, was a social conception, and Jesus retained it in this character. The end toward which he saw the purpose of God moving was nothing less than a redeemed and glorified humanity." Paul would never be satisfied until the Kingdom of God should triumph. To this end he laboured and gave his life. For both Paul and Jesus, then, the general principles of love, gentleness, good-will, peace, generosity, and freedom from entanglements with the things of this world do not lose their validity with the enlargement of the historical horizon. There is no point in using the phrase, "interim ethic." Finally, the social implications of their teaching are not determined or canceled by the thought of any immediate end, which phase will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### PAUL AND THE PAROUSIA

## PAUL AND THE PAROUSIA

The Parousia played such an important part in the early Church life and especially in Paul's outlook and teaching that it is necessary for us to devote a separate chapter to this vital subject. Although the Hebrew and later Jewish eschatological ideas and apocalyptic material have been studied, here we shall limit ourselves to the social, moral, and ethical consequences of the "over-strained Parousia expectation" as presented by the Apostle Paul.

All the scholars and writers would agree that belief in the Parousia affected the attitudes of the early Christians, but there is little agreement upon the actual extent of those beliefs. It has been contended by Albert Schweitzer,<sup>1</sup> for example, that all the Pauline message must be framed in eschatology; and from this viewpoint, it is the most essential feature of the whole. On the other hand, James Stalker<sup>2</sup> says, "While the eschatological point of view clings to certain of his least important utter-

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1. Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p 52ff.
  2. Stalker in Hastings Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Vol. II, p 152.

ances, such as those on the relation of the sexes, it has little to do with his thought in general, which would have been very nearly what it is if his eschatology had been quite different."

Even though we may believe that Schweitzer has gone too far when he implies that we must view everything in Paul's teaching from the eschatological viewpoint, one must not go to the other extreme and ignore it altogether. Dobschütz<sup>3</sup> is among those who consider the subject important and relevant, but he believes it has been over emphasised.

In the early chapters of Acts<sup>4</sup> we find references to the prediction that Jesus would come again. The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a sign of the impending Day of the Lord to which the Old Testament prophecy looks forward. The Jews had been urged to pray that "God may send the Christ whom He hath appointed, even Jesus, whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restoration of all things!" St. Paul warns the Athenians to repent "inasmuch as he

3. Dobschütz, Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p 42.

Cf. also, Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, Vol. 2, p 563.

4. Acts 1:11, 2:20, 3:19-21.

hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."<sup>5</sup>

Jesus' withdrawal after His sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection meant only a temporary concealment of his personality. It was an absence which would be followed by a presence (παρουσία). Even though Christians could hold communion with Him in Spirit, He would enter into the world again in the future. What Jesus had already accomplished through the cross and the resurrection did not make superfluous the possibility of a new and glorious order.

"If one were to ask why Jesus did not at His resurrection immediately establish the new order, Paul's answer might be (though it is nowhere explicitly given) that the exact moment for the coming kingdom was the moment of transition from the old age (αἰών) to the new. That moment was held secret from the whole world; and even Jesus must await the pleasure of God the Father for the signal. At all events the parousia according to Paul would flash upon the world suddenly and unexpectedly."<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, Christians are sojourners on

5. Acts 17:31.

6. Zenos, Plastic Age of the Gospel, p 202.



this earth. Their real citizenship is in heaven,<sup>7</sup> which means that, *κατὰ πνεῦμα* at least, they already exist in the new order. If any man is *ἐν Χριστῷ*, then the *καιρὸς* is there. Some did think, however, that Jesus would return in the flesh. Those who died before this second coming would precede those who were living. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the Dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."<sup>8</sup> The coming of Jesus means not only a resurrection of the dead but a judgment of all with each one receiving his just desert. "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering

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7. Phil. 3:20.

8. I Thess. 4:14-17.

vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed."<sup>9</sup>

"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."<sup>10</sup> Not only will Christians themselves be tested<sup>11</sup> to see whether their work abides, but they will be judges, "know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life."<sup>12</sup> There is a judgment which seems to be going on all the time. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."<sup>13</sup> But this does not prevent a general judgment and a final display of God's glory and a justification of all His ways. This Advent is to introduce a salvation which is the climax of their faith;<sup>14</sup> a redemption for which

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9. II Thess. 1:7-10.  
 10. II Cor. 5:10. Cf. also Rom. 2:16.  
 11. I Cor. 3:13.  
 12. I Cor. 6:3.  
 13. Gal. 6:7.  
 14. Rom. 13:11.

they were sealed, "and not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."<sup>15</sup> Then shall be established the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup>

At first it was thought that this Day of the Lord might come at any moment, like a thief in the night.<sup>17</sup> There was an eager longing for the end,<sup>18</sup> and some Thessalonian Christians thought that the Day had actually come.<sup>19</sup> But as year after year passed and the Lord did not return, we notice a change in attitude. Such a transition can be noticed in the later epistles of Paul. Glover<sup>20</sup> says that the change in thought is so great that one is led to think that the Thessalonian picture of the Parousia is "not the real Paul, certainly not the ultimate Paul. If the passages came in Jude's epistle, they would give no surprise. Paul does not give up the return of Christ, but he seems with time to have felt it to be of less

15. Rom. 8:23. Cf. also Eph. 4:30.

16. II Thess. 1:5.

17. I Thess. 5:1-11.

18. Rom. 8:18-25.

19. II Thess. 2:2.

20. Glover, Paul of Tarsus, p 234.

immediate interest; and he discards the Old Testament picture language. A comparison and a contrast will make this clear. To the Romans he writes of the reward of the good and patient in eternal life, and of the 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish' predestined for those who fight against the truth.<sup>21</sup> Jesus and Plato had said as much. The stress is on the sheer facts of the case and their bearing on morality and honesty: 'God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.'<sup>22</sup> We have seen already how intimate a thought, how deep a conviction of Paul's this certainty of judgment had been from the beginning, how vital a factor in that upheaval which led to his conversion. 'We must all be exhibited before the judgment seat of Christ,' is a thought which he never lost. But the tone is not that of the letters to the Thessalonians; the note is deeper. In the chapter which he writes to Corinthians he might have repeated his earlier picture; it is noticeable that he does not, and it is worth while to ask why. He says emphatically that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor corruption incorruption; the heavenly body will be different somehow from the

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21. Rom. 2:7-9.

22. Rom. 2:16.

earthly -- it will be spiritual, and there he leaves his description; and he continues: 'Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.'<sup>23</sup> Death has lost its sting, the grave will lose its victory; 'but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (I Cor. 15:43:57). There is a distinct change in handling; he is laying more emphasis on the fundamental and is less interested in the manner."<sup>24</sup>

This contrast makes it easy to see why Deissmann<sup>25</sup> and others come to the conclusion that Paul does not set forth a complete eschatological system. "His (Paul) whole being was fired with a world-conquering ethos, and he thirsted with his whole soul for the coming day of God, but he had no 'eschatology,' if by that term a rationally complete and balanced system of eschatology is to be understood. Furthermore, the fragmentary character of his utterances as they have come down to

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23. St. Paul means that not all Christians will die before the Parousia, but that all (the living as well as the dead) will undergo the Resurrection change.

24. Cf. Also, Kennedy, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things, p 196.

25. Deissmann, Paul, p 207f.

us prevents in this case, as in others, any attempt at a full and systematic statement. Foakes-Jackson also points out, "With all his belief in nearness of the second coming of his Lord, Paul, despite all that has been said to the contrary, says but little of what is to happen in the last days. It must have seemed to him of little importance, considering his belief, that those who accepted Christ had already, by union with Him, entered wholly into His new creation. It is remarkable that only once is the Book of Daniel quoted by him, in the very difficult passage about the appearance of the 'Lawless One' (II Thess. 2:3; Dan. 7:25). Nor does he show any literary dependence upon any canonical apocalypse, even the Similitudes of Enoch. In fact, except for I Cor. 15., and I Thess. 4., Paul says little about eschatology."<sup>26</sup>

We are not to infer from Deissman's and Foakes-Jackson's statements that Paul had no eschatological beliefs. They are merely trying to point out that Paul is not setting forth any eschatological system. They are not saying, however, that his belief did not have a moral and ethical effect on the lives of the

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26. Foakes-Jackson, The Life of St. Paul, p 329.

early Christians. The fact that he said as much as he did say would indicate that he was trying to meet certain social situations which had arisen.

We might expect that this belief in the immediate return of the Lord might affect the outlook in more ways than one. It might well give temporary character to all social relations. Some of the Thessalonian Christians did give up their work,<sup>27</sup> and some of the Corinthian Christians thought marriage unnecessary.<sup>28</sup> As a matter of fact, Paul exhorts them to labour, soberness, and self-discipline. Even though it may be all right for them not to marry because of the impending distress and confusion, there is nothing unbecoming in a marriage contract as has already been discussed in the chapter on family relationships.

The principles which Paul sets forth to meet this situation which has arisen as a result of the eschatological outlook proved to be of permanent value regardless of whether the end is at hand or remote.

"Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife

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27. II Thess. 3:10f.

28. I Cor. 7:26-28.

and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."<sup>29</sup>

"And we exhort you, brethern, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another and toward all. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to youward. Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."<sup>30</sup>

As has already been indicated, we might expect an interim ethic as a result of the Parousia. After a careful examination of the ethical demands which Paul insisted upon, we come to the conclusion that in the main, the qualities which would prepare one for the coming of the Lord were of lasting value whether Jesus returned immediately or not. Furthermore, we conclude that passages like I Corinthians 13, Romans 12-14, Ephesians 1-6, and the other selections mentioned in the chapter on Selected Passages of Paul's Teaching cannot possibly be considered as merely an interim ethic with no permanent value.

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29. Rom. 13:12b-14.

30. I Thess. 5:14-22.



Sanday and Headlam are in agreement with this viewpoint in their summarising statement of the early Christian belief in the nearness of the Parousia, only they express it in this way:-<sup>31</sup>

"In the first place, this belief in the nearness of the second coming quickened the religious and moral earnestness of the early Christian. Believing as intently as he did 'that the fashion of this world passeth away,' he 'set his affection on things above'; he lived in the world and yet not of the world. The constant looking forward to the coming of the Lord produced a state of intense spiritual zeal which braced the Church for its earliest and hardest task.

"And secondly, it has been pointed out very ably how much the elasticity and mobility of Christianity were preserved by the fact that the Apostles never realized that they were building up a Church which was to last through the ages. It became the fashion of a later age to ascribe to the Apostles a series of ordinances and constitutions. Any such theory is quite inconsistent with the real spirit of their time. They never wrote or legislated except so far as existing needs demanded. They founded such institutions as were clearly required by some immediate want, or were part of our Lord's teaching. But they never administered or planned with a view to the remote future. Their writings were occasional, suggested by some pressing difficulty; but they thus incidentally laid down great broad principles which became the guiding principles of the Church. The Church therefore is governed by case law, not by code law; by broad principles, not by minute regulations. It may seem a paradox, but yet it

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31. Sanday and Headlam, International Critical Commentary on Romans, p 380-1.

is profoundly true, that the Church is adapted to the needs of every age, just because the original preachers of Christianity never attempted to adapt it to the needs of any period but their own."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SOCIAL PRACTICES OF THE PAULINE CHURCHES.

## THE SOCIAL PRACTICES OF THE PAULINE CHURCHES

"Thanks to the preservation of certain letters of Paul, it is still possible to obtain a glimpse into the life of several gentile Christian communities as early as the sixth decade of the first century. Although these documents were only incidental products of the apostle's work and were not at all intended to be comprehensive histories of the period, they nevertheless contain just the type of information needed to give one first-hand acquaintance with characteristic phases in the activity of the new religious societies. Because of their intimate and personal character, they place the modern reader in immediate touch with the actual life of various Christian groups in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy, between the years 50 and 65."<sup>1</sup>

Before we look at some of the selected passages of Paul's writings, it will be of value for us to note some of the social practices in the early Christian communities. From the very beginning of the Christian Church, the problem of poverty had been an urgent one.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that one of the causes for the poverty in the Mother Church at Jerusalem was to be found in its communal experiments,<sup>3</sup> (Although after a careful study of the account in Acts,<sup>4</sup> we notice that the communism practised was not the

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1. Case, The Social Origins of Christianity, p 117.
  2. Acts 6:1. Gal. 2:9ff. II Cor. 8:2ff.
  3. Phillips, The New Commandment, p 25.
  4. Acts 4:32ff.

type we associate with the word to-day. It was on a voluntary basis. It is true that Barnabas,<sup>5</sup> Ananias, and Sapphira<sup>6</sup> followed communal plans. But there was no rule on this point, and it would be wrong to say that the Pauline churches adopted this principle for the common good. There was no forced obligation to surrender private property.<sup>7</sup>

There was, however, a conscious effort to care for the poor and the needy. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul holds up the Christians of Macedonia as an example to those of Corinth. Without even asking for funds, the Macedonians voluntarily made a contribution to "the poor saints of Jerusalem," regardless of their own "deep poverty."<sup>8</sup> The Corinthians had already made a beginning the year before,<sup>9</sup> and now he simply urges them to complete the thing which they had started.<sup>10</sup>

Phillips summarises the social practice of alms-giving as set forth by Paul in this way:-

5. Acts 4:36.

6. Acts 5:1ff.

7. Cf. Dobschütz, Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p 143ff.

8. II Cor. 8:3-4.

9. II Cor. 8:10.

10. II Cor. 8:11.

"(1) The motive to which he appeals. This is the highest motive of all -- 'imitation of Christ' and His self-sacrifice. 'Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.'

"(2) The need of voluntariness. 'Not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.' (II Cor. 9:7).

"(3) The principle of mutuality. There must be 'give and take' among Christians. 'Your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want.....that there may be equality.' (II Cor. 9:7).

"(4) The proportion of obligation to opportunity. As Mr. Spurgeon used to say, 'The question is not what a man gives but what he has left.' 'If the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not.' (II Cor. 8:12).

"(5) The certainty of the Divine blessing on generous giving. St. Paul, as a practical man, does not disdain the motive to charity which consists in the hope of spiritual advantage for the giver. But this motive is not over-emphasized: and the advantage promised is purely spiritual. 'God is able to make all grace abound unto you' (II Cor. 9:8) -- 'grace for grace' as St. John would say. There is no question here of a Pharisaic self-advertisement such as was so scathingly condemned by our Lord.

"(6) The necessity of responsible administration of charitable funds. St. Paul would have small sympathy with such modern charitable organizations as 'decline to produce a balance sheet.' He had himself insisted on the appointment by 'the Churches' of a 'brother' to see that the money entrusted to him reached its intended destination, or, as he says, 'to travel with us in the matter of this grace which is ministered by us.....avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty: for we take thought for things honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of

men.' (II Cor. 8:18f; cf. I Cor. 16:3). He had too many enemies on his track to be willing to give to their malevolence more handle than he could help.

"(7) The need of reinforcing exhortation by organization. Only so will a Church realize its maximum effort in the matter of almsgiving. It was as a sort of 'organizing secretary' for the fund that St. Paul had sent to Corinth the popular Titus and the 'brother' above-mentioned. The need of organized giving is still further emphasized in I Cor. 16:2, where we find what we should call nowadays a 'free-will offering scheme' adumbrated, on the exceedingly sound and business-like principle that a system of small regular donations will produce more than a system of occasional large ones. 'Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by in store as he may prosper.' St. Paul seems to have made this system a regular part of the organization of the Churches which he founded. At least, he tells us that he had given the same order to 'the Churches of Galatia' also."<sup>11</sup>

We do not have enough information at our disposal to get a complete picture of early church life. Probably very little organization existed. As long as Paul lived, he was the chief authority on important questions. From I Cor. 16:15, 17, we note that such men as Stephanas were given a sort of natural leadership because of their service, loyalty, and generosity. Paul called upon the Christians to submit to such leadership.<sup>12</sup> It is probably this kind of ruler which

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11. Phillips, op. cit. p 29-31.

12. I Cor. 16:16.

is referred to in Romans 12:8 ὁ πρῶτος ἀμενος  
 and I Cor. 12:28 καὶ βερωμένοις . If we exclude  
 the Pastoral Epistles, the word "deacon" occurs only  
 once, at the beginning of the Epistle to the Philip-  
 pians where Paul salutes the Church of Philippi οὐκ  
 ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις .<sup>13</sup> It is not our purpose  
 to enter into the controversy over the meaning of the  
 word deacon. It is sufficient for us to notice the  
 general social practice of adequate care for those  
 in need. "...distributing to the necessity of the  
 saints; given to hospitality."<sup>14</sup>

There seems to be no direct teaching on the  
 question of wealth<sup>15</sup> although Paul says in Colossians

13. Phil. 1:1

14. Rom. 12:13.

15. It is in the Pastoral Epistles that we get  
 the solemn warning against wealth. The love  
 of money is condemned, I Tim. 3:3, 8. "Godli-  
 ness with contentment is great gain: for we  
 brought nothing into the world, for neither  
 can we carry anything out; but having food  
 and covering we shall be therewith content.  
 But they that are minded to be rich fall in-  
 to a temptation and a snare and many foolish  
 and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in  
 destruction and perdition. For the love of  
 money is a root of all kinds of evil: which  
 some reaching after have been led astray  
 from the faith, and have pierced themselves  
 through with many sorrows. But thou, O man  
 of God, flee these things; and follow after  
 righteousness, godliness, faith, love,  
 patience, meekness....." (I Tim. 6:6-11).



3:5 that covetousness is idolatry and he is anxious that such a sin be not named among the Ephesians.<sup>16</sup> From these two references and especially the ones ? noted below in the Pastoral Epistles, we note the special dangers and temptations of wealth. These declarations do not lead us to believe that the early Christians practised poverty as a virtue or that wealth was an evil in itself.<sup>17</sup>

This problem of poverty also throws some light on the keeping of the Lord's Supper. Paul had already found a guiding principle for their social practice. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are one man in Christ Jesus."<sup>18</sup>

Regardless of this principle of spiritual equality there were contradictions and abuses in the Corinthian community. One of the difficulties found its way into the Agape or communion-meal. A social practice which had originated in Jerusalem was continued

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5. 3-5. 16. Eph. 3:5. Cf. I Cor. 6:10.  
 17. Cf. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World, p 129-30.  
 18. Gal. 3:26-28.

in Corinth. Members of the Church came together for a common meal followed by the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Each person brought his own food to share with the others in a common brotherhood.

Instead of this, the well-to-do and more prosperous members would eat their own food while the poorer members would have little or nothing. Sometimes the rich would eat their food before the poor came so they would not have to share or take their meal with them. Not only was brotherhood violated and the equal standing of all members lost sight of, but the behaviour of the members at the table was a disgrace and profaned the Lord's Supper. "When," writes the Apostle, "ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also factions among you....when ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper: for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."<sup>19</sup>

After recalling the original institution of the Lord's Supper as he had received it from the Lord,<sup>20</sup> he tells them that the feast is to be a common feast by all the church members and they are to wait for one another. If they are so hungry they cannot wait, then they should eat something before they come. Their meal was not to degenerate into an ordinary social banquet like the pagan guilds.

Paul goes on to emphasise the principle of unity in the Christian church. Even though there may be "diversities of gifts, there is the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all..... for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the

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20. I Cor. 11:23-27.

ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."<sup>21</sup>

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21. I Cor. 12:12-27

So much for the theory of the matter, but it did not remain mere theory. This was the basis of the actual social practice of early Christianity. The churches were made up of both men and women of different stations in life. Some were slaves, some were householders, others were traders, artisans, tent-makers, laborers. Some were rich enough to own houses where they could provide a meeting place for the Christian assemblies. Racial and national differences were not recognised. Jews, Syrians, Greeks, persons of any race became one in Christ.

"Admission to membership rested upon a purely personal basis. Questions of ancestry, of social status, or of cultural attainment, or even of preparatory moral excellence, did not enter into the consideration. No herald in the Christian assemblies announced, after the model of the Eleusinian mysteries, that admission to the cult was open only to those who could meet specified tests of a ritual or moral sort. Christians invited even the most degenerate members of society to test for themselves the redeeming and purifying power of the new faith. Paul would have responded as proudly as Origen did two centuries later to the charge of Christian laxity in selecting its membership, that other religions might well exercise care in the selecting of a prepared membership, but that the efficacy of Christianity was so great as to make preliminary cautions unnecessary. The new religion was so powerful that it could transform even the vilest sinner into the purest saint. No period of preliminary preparation with abstinences, fasting, or other purging rites was prescribed. Rather the individual submitted himself in his natural state,

whatever that might be, to the transforming efficacy of the divine power represented by the Christian movement. Not by his own preparatory work, but purely and simply through the sufficiency of the Christ in whom he trusted, did he secure his salvation. Paul unequivocally affirmed that the new religion operated by divine power to effect salvation for everyone who exercised faith. (Rom. 1:16). The whole matter could be epitomized in the terse formula: 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'" (Rom. 10:9).<sup>22</sup>

The separate interests of master or slave, Jew or Gentile, man or woman, barbarian or man of culture "faded into nothing before the absorbing fact which made each of these a Christian." Christ lived in each and therefore the life of all was one.<sup>23</sup> Paul was setting forth a more excellent way, the way of love.<sup>24</sup>

22. Case, The Social Origins of Christianity, p 133-35.

23. I Cor. 12; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:1-6; Col. 1:18-29.

Cf. Dodd, The Meaning of Paul for Today. This teaching of Paul is the basis for Dodd's pertinent phrase, "the Divine Commonwealth" and Royce's phrase, "the Beloved Community." The Greek word "Koinonia" was originally a commercial term implying co-partnership. The early Christians were literally co-partners, "joint-heirs" with Christ. The common life of a multitude of Christians made a Christian community, a "Divine Commonwealth." They were the body of Christ and love was to be the guiding principle which united them to God and their fellowman.

24. I Cor. 12:31-13:1-13.

Here is sufficient correction to the idea that Paul's ethic was merely an individual thing. The whole body of Christ, or in another phrase, "The Divine Commonwealth of God," was to be built up into an ordered and organic whole.<sup>25</sup>

The phrase, "the Divine Commonwealth," also corresponds to Paul's "ecclesia of God."<sup>26</sup> This "ecclesia of God" is to practise love, to bear one another's burdens, to build each other up in love, to have the same mind which was also in Christ.<sup>27</sup>

"In the very act, therefore, of attaining its liberty to exist, the Divine Commonwealth has transcended the great divisions of men. In principle it has transcended them all, and by seriously living out that which its association means, it is on the way to comprehending the whole race. Short of that its development can never stop. This is the revealing of the sons of God for which the whole creation is waiting."<sup>28</sup>

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the teaching of Paul had social implications for the entire life of man and for the whole race of mankind. The principle of love bulks very large in all

25. Eph. 4:16.

26. I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13.

27. Phil. 2:5. To have the same mind which was in Christ would certainly imply the same thoughts and actions towards one another as they would have in communion with Christ.

28. Dodd, Op. Cit. p 145.

social practices of the beloved community. Had they freedom? Yes, but not a freedom which would ignore the freedom and liberty of others within the group. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, Christian freedom is passionately declared, but it does not follow that one can give vent to selfish impulses which would affect the social harmony of the whole. "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."<sup>29</sup>

Moffatt<sup>30</sup> makes an important observation in this connection when he says that the perfection of the church depends upon the spirit and discipline of this love as revealed by Paul. "May the Lord make you increase and excel in love to one another and to all men (as is my love for you), so as to strengthen your hearts and make them blameless in holiness before our

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29. Gal. 5:13-16.

30. Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, p 190.



God and Father."<sup>31</sup>

"No form of holiness that sits loose to the obligations of brotherly love will come up to the standards of God, for the 'holy church' is the church that abounds and excels in such love: ἀγιωσύνη or holiness implies the vital relation of life to the God to whom that life belongs, and His nature is love. Again in Colossians 3:14, where he is summoning the local church to the Christian graces of humility and patience and mutual consideration, he declares, above all you must be loving, for love is ( σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος ) the link of the perfect life, as it holds Christians together in fellowship under the strain of the common life. Love checks the selfish, hard tempers which keep people apart and thus militate against the maturing of good fellowship. Here τελειότης is the full expression of the divine life in the community, devoid of bitter words and angry feelings, and freed from the ugly defects of immorality and dishonesty. The argument is parallel to that of Matthew 5:43-48. 'By perfection,' says Wesley in a letter to his brother Charles, written about 1762, 'by perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, ruling all the tempers, words, and actions, the whole heart and the whole life.' No passage better illustrates the emphasis of the apostle upon the truth that for individuals to live the 'perfect' life of the Christian community, with all its hindrances to brotherly intercourse, such manly, thorough-going, love was absolutely essential."<sup>32</sup>

A similar appeal for the same social practice can be seen in Paul's words to the Corinthians, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love."<sup>33</sup>

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31. I Thess. 3:12, 13b. (Moffatt Translation).

32. Moffatt, Op. Cit, p 191-2.

33. I Cor. 16:13-14.

People who are ardent in maintaining the faith sometimes become dictatorial, arrogant, and arbitrary. Leaders who have strong convictions have the temptation to become divisive and the social implications of Paul's counsel are clear. The need of Christian love in all matters is obvious.

Christians in all the various communities seem to be subject to this temptation mentioned above, for Paul emphasises mutual love as the social ideal in his letters to the Philippians and the Ephesians.

"I pray you to give me the utter joy of knowing you are living in harmony, with the same feelings of love, with one heart and soul, never acting for private ends or from vanity, but humbly considering each other the better man, and each with an eye to the interests of others as well as his own."<sup>34</sup> "I beg you to live a life worthy of your calling, with perfect modesty and gentleness, showing forbearance to one another patiently, zealous in love to preserve the unity of the Spirit by binding peace upon yourselves."<sup>35</sup>

Paul leaves no doubt in our mind that love is the social principle to be practiced in all the rela-

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34. Phil. 2:2-4. (Moffatt Translation).

35. Eph. 4:1b-3. (Moffatt Translation).

tionships of life, but we also gather from his utterances that there were some who made a pretence of practicing love. They may have given the appearance of love, but it was for some ulterior motive. "Let love be without hypocrisy" he says to the Romans (12:9), and to the Christians at Corinth he says, "giving no occasion of stumbling in anything....in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned."<sup>36</sup> Love was to be a real and sincere thing. To the Ephesians he emphasises this same truth in this way, "speaking the truth in love, grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."<sup>37</sup> Here again we have love, which is the principle of growth for the Church and the answer to any social practices which might hinder that growth.

Another subtle temptation for those who make an earnest effort to practice the principle of love in

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36. II Cor. 6:3a, 6.

37. Eph. 4:15-16.

all things was that of flattery. This is a temptation which Christian leaders may resort to in order to accomplish some purpose. Paul was very sensitive about this in his own mission and he mentions it to the Thessalonians. "For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of coveteousness, God is witness."<sup>38</sup>

The seriousness of another temptation can be seen in Philippians 1:9, so serious that Paul prays about it. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." In the Hymn of Love in I Corinthians 13, Paul had mentioned that one could know all mysteries and possess all knowledge, but that if one had no love, they were nothing. But here in his prayer for the Philippians he is showing that it is equally absurd to have love without knowledge and discernment. Genuine love is more than sentiment and

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38. I Thess. 2:5.

cheap emotionalism. If there is to be real advancement in a community, there must be moral discrimination and a growing knowledge. Affection must be tempered with intelligence. Social wrongs and mistakes can be perpetrated by unintelligent love and unenlightened sincerity. A love which stops short of action may evaporate into mere emotionalism. A point is made of this in connection with the collection to be taken in Corinth. "Show ye therefore unto them in the faces of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf."<sup>39</sup>

In his concern for the advancement of the Church of Christ and the proclaiming of the Gospel, Paul could not be accused of being indifferent to the churches or to individuals within the communities. In their concern for a cause or purpose some individuals fail to practise love and show interest in specific individuals: not so Paul. The sixteenth chapter of Romans contains many names such as "my beloved Epaenetus, Mary, Andronicus, Junias, Ampliatus, Rubanus, Stachys, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus,

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39. II Cor. 8:24.

Cf. Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, p 196.

Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus, and Olympas; Luke, the beloved physician (Co. 4:7), Philemon and Onesimus the slave (Philemon 1:16). He does not fail to express his affection for the special groups or churches scattered throughout the Roman Empire, as for example the Thessalonians. "But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you":<sup>40</sup> "But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us":<sup>41</sup> "my love be with you all in Christ Jesus":<sup>42</sup> "for out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."<sup>43</sup> And one of the most characteristic passages of all is found in Philippians,

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40. I Thess. 3:6.

41. I Thess. 2:7-8.

42. I Cor. 16:24.

43. II Cor. 2:4.

"for God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus." These are just a few of the references which show his own social practice.

When we come to consider the social practice of love towards the outside world, the references are not so numerous. Paul warns the Thessalonians about confining their love to their own group, "and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men."<sup>44</sup>

"Socially and economically it was quite impossible for the Christians as individuals to break with their environment. They must earn their living by accustomed means, which meant that a Christian slave must still perform his appointed task among heathen associations in the household of his master. The small Christian shopkeeper must still cater to his pagan customers. The Christian wife must perform her duties in the home, even though her husband was a typical pagan who held the new religion in utter contempt. Thus most Christians as individuals must continue to live in the pagan life of association with demons, but the new strength and power which they carried away from their experiences at the meetings of the Christian groups enabled them to go forth with full assurance of safety. They bore about with them in the experiences of the Spirit in their inner lives a new sense of supremacy over all the demonic phases of their environment."<sup>45</sup>

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44. I Thess. 3:12.

45. Case, The Social Origins of Christianity, p 138-39.

In our chapter on The Social World of Paul, we have noted how decadent and idolatrous the times were and how essential it was for the Christians to free themselves from the world. Membership in the pagan guilds and clubs would involve them in recognition of some pagan god. If they entered in any of the games, there were brutality and gambling in close connection. We look at the statues of Mercury and Venus and admire their beauty, but in those times the gods were significant. We look at the forms of pagan literature and admire their literary quality, but at the time Polytheism was too much alive for the Christians to develop the cultural and aesthetic aspects of their life. Is it any wonder that Paul says that their practice is "to be in the world but not of it," "And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable will of God."<sup>46</sup> They were to be luminaries in the world, "that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are

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46. Rom. 12:2.



seen as lights in the world."<sup>47</sup>

Because of the evil conditions in the world, Cadoux<sup>48</sup> thinks that the social practice of love was narrowed down to the brotherhood. "On the whole, we cannot resist the impression that 'love for man....' lost among the early Christians something of the meaning which it had to Jesus. The notable fact about it is the growing tendency to narrow the circle, so that Christian love becomes love for the brotherhood, that is, for one's fellow-disciples. It is true that love as a constant attitude of the heart is inculcated by many of the writers of the period, and that in some cases love for those without the church is explicitly referred to; but as a rule, the emphasis is laid solely upon love for the brethren."<sup>49</sup>

Moffatt<sup>50</sup> disagrees with this, however, and believes we misinterpret primitive Christianity entirely if we see any narrowing of the principle of love. "It is sometimes made a reproach against the

47. Phil. 2:15.

48. Cadoux, The Early Church and the World, p 90-1.

Scott, Christianity According to St. Paul, p 32, holds to this view also.

49. Cadoux, Op. Cit. p 90-1.

50. Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, p 203f.

Apostle's ethic, and indeed against N. T. writers, that they narrowed the wide sympathies of Jesus to an interest in Church brotherhood. But this rests on a modern misconception. Christian love such as Jesus had taught for all and sundry was belief in God's ends <sup>7</sup> within them, and it was the controlling sense of this that prompted missions; the fellowship of the Church was open and opened to people of all nations. 'Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely' -- as one prophet put it. And the satisfying Water was offered to thirsty souls in the great world. The deepest service of Christian love was rightly understood as the imparting of this gospel. Short of that, of course, there was friendly service and aid to any in need, no matter whether they were Jews or pagans. This, by common consent, Christians rendered; it was one of the outstanding tributes paid to them by public opinion, that their human and humane interests flowed out upon people who did not share their faith. Again, there was the forgiving spirit; when they were ill-treated and abused by outsiders, the injunction of Jesus was wonderfully obeyed in all the circles of the early Church, and thereby the command of love was ratified. These generous and forbearing attitudes were frequently an effective means of propaganda. But

they were not adopted merely for that reason, and even when they did not produce that effect, Christians continued to practise them. It is unhistorical and superficial to expect any other kind of sympathy with the world in the early Church. Christians had learned from their Lord that the heart and treasure of love lay in a religious relationship, and it was their instinctive concern to share this with others, not to promote vague sympathies with men in general on the ground of a supposed brotherhood of mankind. We misinterpret primitive Christianity entirely if we suppose that with Paulinism there begins a restricting of love to some sectarian morality, which gained intensity at the expense of universal range. When one considers the provocations to which the early Christians were exposed, and the pressure of pagan civilization which tended to put them on the defensive, in order to preserve their flame of life from being blown out by the strong winds of the world, it becomes indeed remarkable how few lapses there were from the conciliatory, kindly temper of Christian charity, and how persistently upon the whole the churches clung to the heroic unselfishness which Jesus had inculcated in his followers in dealing with outsiders. In estimating

this aspect of love in Paulinism, as in the later spheres, we do well to bear in mind these two considerations: first, that no such sublimated cosmopolitanism as that expressed by 'the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man' was ever dreamed of as equivalent for the real Christian message of love; and secondly, that while the apostle warned his followers against reducing the church to a religious club, he was keenly alive, and sought to make them alive, to the fact that the Church was the Household of the faith, in which members had a primary duty to their fellows, however kindly and sympathetic they might feel and act towards people on the outside."<sup>51</sup>

After all the evidence is considered and the scriptural references are examined, our conclusion is that Moffatt is right in his clear and concise statement above. In addition to some of the references already quoted, the one in Romans 12:17f seems to be very clear on this point, "Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God:

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<sup>51</sup>. Moffatt, Op. Cit. p 203-4.

for it is written, 'Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense,' saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Surely there could be little doubt in the mind of any reader concerning the implications of such teaching for social living among all peoples. There is another clear statement in Galatians, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith."<sup>52</sup> "See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another and toward all."<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the social and ethical principle of love, we would expect Paul to insist on the practice of truthfulness and sincerity.<sup>54</sup> He also expects Christians to exercise wisdom. "Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time."<sup>55</sup> Humility

52. Gal. 6:10.

53. I Thess. 5:15. Other references which show the implications of this social principle of love towards outsiders are: I Thess. 3:12, 4:12; I Cor. 10:32f, 16:14; II Cor. 6:3, 8:21; Rom. 14:17f.

54. Eph. 4:15, 5:9; I Cor. 13:6.

55. Col. 4:5.

is a social virtue which receives considerable emphasis. "For if any man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."<sup>56</sup> "Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly."<sup>57</sup> One of the best examples of all is Paul's reference to the humility of Christ in Philippians 2:5ff., where he exhorts them to have the same mind in them which was in Christ, was emptied himself, taking on himself the form of a servant and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

The problem of slavery has been discussed in a separate chapter. It is sufficient for us to call attention to the fact that slavery continued to exist as a social practice within the Christian body itself. Christians may have emancipated their slaves; we are not sure. However, we do not get any direct order making it a Christian duty to emancipate the slaves. We are sure of this, though; that no differences between slave and master appeared in the Christian meetings. There was equality in the service of the Lord and

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56. Gal. 6:3.

57. Rom. 12:16.

sonship to a common Father. Onesimus, for example, was to be treated as a "brother beloved." Even if the institution of slavery remained for a long time, the Christian social practice was one of kindness and love. The slave was a child of God just as much as any one else and he was to be treated as such.

Before this chapter is brought to a close, perhaps another social condition should be mentioned even though the Parousia is also considered in a separate chapter. The Thessalonian Christians were troubled about this problem to the point that it was affecting their daily lives. Some were worrying about whether those who had already died would share in the blessings of the Second Coming. Others were neglecting their daily work and meddling in other people's affairs. These were social practices which Paul could not tolerate. So he writes thus: "But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you; that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing."<sup>58</sup> "For even when we were

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58. I Thess. 4:10-12.

with you, this we commanded you, if any will not work, neither let them eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."59

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59. II Thess. 3:10-12.



## CHAPTER IX

SELECTED PASSAGES OF PAUL'S TEACHING  
SHOWING THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS.

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We have already gained some insight into the social implication of Paul's teaching as we have viewed particular problems such as slavery, family relationships, the state, and the social practices of the early Church. Another way to secure a more adequate grasp of the social implications of his teaching is to examine selected passages. Our attention naturally turns to the more practical passages or what are sometimes called the 'hortatory sections.'

As Phillips<sup>1</sup> suggests, if we were to take a textbook for this section, it would be the Epistle to the Ephesians. The under-lying thought is that of unity. The first three chapters give the theoretical statement, and the last three show the practical out-working of God's plan. "The cosmic process starts from unity and is to issue in unity." It is God's purpose to "unite" all things. Sin has destroyed this unity, but the purpose of redemption is to restore it.

He opens the epistle with the conventional

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1. Phillips, The New Commandment, p 41.

salutation and prayer of thanksgiving for all that God has done in Christ for the redemption and salvation of man. In verses 9 and 10, the key to the whole epistle is given, "He has granted us complete insight and understanding of the open secret of his will, showing us how it was the purpose of his design so to order it in the fullness of the ages that all things in heaven and earth alike should be gathered up in Christ."<sup>42</sup>

"Christ, that is to say, is to be the centre in which all conflicting forces are at last to find their unity. In the light of this divine purpose, hidden from all ages and now revealed, Paul considers the significance of the Church. He takes his departure from the visible fact that Jews and Gentiles, formerly hostile, have been reconciled in the Church. Out of a divided humanity God has made a new, united humanity through Christ. This is to be the beginning of a world-wide process of reconciliation. The Church is like the first of the rings made by a stone thrown into water. An impulse has begun with the Church which will never cease until it has spread through the whole universe. So the epistle turns on these two ideas -- that Christ is the principle of union, and that the Church is His instrument whereby He will finally reconcile all things in heaven and earth."<sup>3</sup>

Paul does not go into prolonged discussion of any theory of sin or of the reasons for the discord in the universe; he merely accepts what is a fact.

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2. Moffatt Translation

3. E. F. Scott, The Epistles of Paul, p 125.

The antagonisms, the discords, and the strife are here, and it is God's purpose to heal the divisions. Through all the confusion of the past ages God's purpose has been working itself out. It is not God's will that discord and distinctions should exist. Man's selfishness, exclusiveness, and pride are to blame. Man has halted the unifying process. "But the far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves" is to reunite all in Christ. "One in Christ they were at the beginning; one in Christ they shall again be at the end."

"Whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.....for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named."<sup>4</sup>

No one would deny the implications of such teaching, namely, the brotherhood of man resting on the Fatherhood of God. This was the very foundation of the early Church. All were sons of the same Father. Christ died for all. All were one in Him. This

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4. Eph. 3:4-6, 14-15.

sense of unity and fellowship was the very texture of the Church. Unfortunately this basic truth has become a mere platitude. Worse yet, a great mass of church members fail to realise the social implications of their own Christian faith. They may render lip service to the statement of "the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God," but it does not affect their social practices in life as it was intended and taught by the Apostle Paul.

"Liberty is not the only member of the famous revolutionary trinity in whose name monstrous crimes have been committed: and to-day it is odd how often the word 'fraternity' is to be found on the lips of those who proclaim the 'class war.' The modern man, again, may justly pride himself on the final disappearance from the civilized world of the distinction between 'bond and free': but the distinction between 'black and white' still persists and is, ultimately, no less disloyal to the idea of human brotherhood. The truth is that men are always glad enough to claim equality and fraternity when these things mean advantage for themselves. When they mean not advantage but concession and sacrifice, they are much less enthusiastic."<sup>5</sup>

Christ is the key person in this unity which is to be established. He is the "Chief Cornerstone." He is the "Head of the New Humanity," and it is "in Him" that men find the power to carry out this purpose

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5. Phillips, Op. Cit. p 45.

which God has for mankind. To each man "in Christ" grace is given. "It is the gift of God"<sup>6</sup> and appropriated by faith. All may receive this gift of God. There is no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile. "Whereas now, within Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, he who has made both of a unity and destroyed the barrier which kept us apart; in his own flesh he put an end to the feud of the Law with its code of commands, so as to make peace by the creation of a new Man in himself out of both parties, so as himself to give the death-blow to that feud by reconciling them both to God in one Body through the cross; he came with a gospel of peace for those far away (that is, for you) and for those who were near, for it is through him that we both enjoy our access to the Father in one Spirit, Thus you are strangers and foreigners no longer, you share the membership of the saints, you belong to God's own household, you are a building that rests on the apostles and prophets as its foundation, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure

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6. Eph. 2:8.

is welded together and rises into a sacred temple in the Lord, and in him you are yourselves built into this to form a habitation for God in the Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

The Church is to exercise an important function in the work of redemption. It is expressed in different ways. The new life which is to be found "in Christ" is to be found in the Church. The Church is to expand until it includes all mankind. As long as there are sin and divisions, so long will the work of the Church be incomplete. The Church is the body of Christ. Christ, as Head of the Church, works through it to complete the work of redemption.

"Men are thus to be saved, not as isolated individuals, but in and through a society. Man is by nature a 'social animal,' and needs the contact and influence of others for his development. Now the Church (at least in so far as it corresponds to the Divine plan) is the ideal society. It is such because it rests upon the one and only foundation of a true human life -- that is to say, reconciliation with God. Men are to be re-united to one another by being re-united to God. The effect of sin is to sever both man from man and man from God; 'in Christ' both separations are done away. Thus the Church lives and grows by means of the Divine life imparted to it through Christ. It does not repose on the shifting, insecure foundation of mere human good-will: but on the might and love of God Himself. It is in virtue of the power and grace that proceed from that love that it is enabled to

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7. Eph. 2:13-21. Moffatt's Translation.

overcome the centrifugal forces of selfishness and pride which so perpetually prove the ruin of ordinary human associations. That is why the Apostle prays for his hearers, 'that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith: to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God' (Eph. 3:16f.)."<sup>8</sup>

Our presentation thus far in this chapter may sound theoretical and doctrinal. One might ask what is the social and practical significance of all of this? In answering this question, the writer does not believe that he is being untrue to the Scriptures or adding anything to what is already there. In fact Paul himself may sound intensely theological and theoretical, but he always eventually becomes very practical. So it is in this epistle to the Ephesians. After elaborating upon the salvation which has come through Christ, after making known the "mystery" that all things in heaven and earth are to be reunited in Christ, and the Church is to be God's instrument for reconciling all things in Christ, Paul opens the fourth chapter by setting forth what is

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8. Phillips, Op. Cit. p 51-2.



expected of the members of the Church, this new society within a society. God's gift of salvation had been a free gift, but that did not dissolve man<sup>2</sup> of moral and social responsibility. There was work to be done. This new society must learn to co-operate in fulfilling its various functions. There must be a mutual respect and love among the different members. Therefore Paul's opening exhortation in this fourth chapter is to the point:

"I therefore....beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ"<sup>9</sup>....."and he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:.....but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth,

according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."<sup>10</sup>

Surely there can be no doubt about the social implications of the ethical virtues set forth in the opening verses above. Lowliness which is humility, meekness and gentleness, forbearance and love are all social virtues which are absolutely necessary for the building up of society. Through the centuries, bitter experience has taught us that lack of these social virtues has meant the ruin of human associations. Sacrifice means life, selfishness means annihilation for the individual, for the community, the state or the nation alike. There can be no real and lasting community life without the practice of these social virtues. Each member must be willing to give up his own selfish interests for the benefit of the whole. All are to be eager to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The diversity of talents and gifts are recognised and elaborated upon more fully in I Corinthians 12, and in Romans. "Even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of

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10. Eph. 4:11-16.

another."<sup>11</sup> The ideal then, is one of unity in diversity. Each member may have a different function, but all contribute their part to form an organic whole. "The body is not one member but many...if the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"<sup>12</sup> The common welfare of the whole depends upon the genuine co-operation of the various parts. If this were true for the little groups of Paul's day, how much more it is true for the complex life of the modern world. No one nation can exist permanently by itself. The welfare of all the nations depends upon their co-operation. And each has an important function in the life of the whole. Here then, is a social principle which has implications not only for individuals within a group, the Church within a society, a community within a State, but for a nation within a possible Commonwealth of Nations.

Just as soon as one group or part begins to act as though it were a law unto itself, the unity of the whole is broken and disaster follows. Paul makes this clear in his statement, "that there should

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11. Rom. 12:4-5.

12. I Cor. 12:14ff.

be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it, or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."<sup>13</sup> Of course, this was advice for a small group in Corinth, but the above statement contains a social principle which has far reaching implications. If only the members of the Church, or citizens of the States, and nations of the world had applied this principle long ago, there would be much less misery, degradation, poverty, and threat of war in the world.

There was a time in the history of the United States when it discovered that it could not remain half-slave and half-free. When there were members of society in poverty and servitude, their condition affected the welfare of the whole. During the last world-wide depression it was discovered by bitter experience that when one member of the society of nations was in distress, the prosperity and happiness of all were affected.

Certain nations have also discovered that when some of their citizens are out of work, the prosperity and welfare of all the citizens are affected. When

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13. I Cor. 12:25-26.

disease and malnutrition affect individuals within a group, the welfare of the whole is impaired. When kidnappers, racketeers, corrupt politicians are allowed to prey upon certain members of society, the whole group is in jeopardy. When the knitting mills of a little New England village closed, it stopped ordering some supplies which came from China and the well-being of little villages in China was impaired. So it is when one member suffers; all the members suffer and when one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. The implications of this principle, which was originally given for a little group in Corinth, are far reaching, universal in its application, and of permanent value for the welfare of mankind.

This principle is particularly applicable to the Church itself. If the lack of its application means chaos and disaster for society as a whole or for any group within society, how much more is there danger for the Church itself. As has already been pointed out, the Church exists in order to realise the final unity of mankind. Jew, Roman, Greek, Scythian, bond and free, male and female were all one "in Christ." All distinctions and barriers had been eliminated. Differences of ability and talent were recognised.

Each person was important and had his contribution to make to the common welfare. In no case was it a leveling down of the group. But through the years this ideal of unity has broken down, not because it was not practical, but because it was not practised. More and more this question of unity in the Church is being faced by its members. Just as long as this division continues, so long will the mission and purpose of the Church be impaired and ineffective.

Two very significant world conferences, Life and Work Conference at Oxford, Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh, were held in nineteen hundred and thirty-seven. A plan was proposed for a Federation of All the Non-Roman Churches of the World, with a General Assembly of two hundred delegates meeting every five years, and a central World Council of Churches with approximately sixty members meeting annually.

The proposed plan was indorsed in principle by both conferences, and a committee of fourteen was appointed to bring it into being. The plan can prove successful if it is more than just a unity in the minds of men. The real source of unity must be in Jesus Chirst, whose one life flows through the Body of the Church and subdues

all wills to His.

Phillips<sup>14</sup> speaks to the point on this issue when he says, "Nor must we put ourselves off with any soothing complacencies as to our being 'one in spirit,' even though outwardly divided. Dean Robinson (Ephesians p 93) well points out that when St. Paul speaks of 'One Body and One Spirit,' 'no separation of body and spirit is contemplated. The notion that there could be several 'bodies' with a unity of 'spirit' is entirely alien to the thought of St. Paul.' If the Apostle's soul was filled with so passionate a horror by the 'contentions' in the Church of Corinth, what would he have thought of the strife of definitely constituted and mutually competitive 'denominations?' Not until the Church has itself learned the lesson of unity and brotherhood can it impart these lessons to others. For this, it must be repeated, is its raison d'etre. The Church is intended to be the 'ideal society' -- the pattern of a common life lived according to the Divine will. It is only as the spirit of the ideal Church becomes the actual spirit, not of the Church only, but of all mankind, that human life can

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14. Phillips, Op. Cit. p 58f.

become what God means it to be. A perfect social order is not (as so many social reformers seem mistakenly to imagine) a matter of mere organisation -- as though a skilful arrangement of the component parts could compensate for the inherent faultiness of the parts themselves. Social perfection must rest on a moral foundation: it implies a radical change of heart. 'The Kingdom of God is.....righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.' (Rom. 14:7). It may be natural for the strong to trample on the weak: but the very idea of basing human relations on the 'struggle for existence' would be intolerable to St. Paul. Even now, when discord reigns supreme, the Christian must see that he at least is free from blame for it. He cannot force others to be at peace with him; but (at least in intention) he must be at peace with others. 'If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.' (Rom. 12:18). Rather than infringe upon this peace, he must be ready to endure personal wrong, leaving the ultimate vindication of his case to a righteous God. 'Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will



recompense, saith the Lord.'" (Rom. 12:19)<sup>15</sup>

For the Christians of Paul's time and of the present, there were social intimations in Paul's words in Ephesians 4:17-19, "Now in the Lord I insist and protest that you give up living like pagans; for their purposes are futile, their intelligence is darkened, they are estranged from the life of God by the ignorance which their dullness of heart has produced in them -- men who have recklessly abandoned themselves to sensuality, with a lust for the business of impurity in every shape and form." (Moffatt's Translation). By recalling the terrible social and moral conditions which were described in the chapter, "The Social World of Paul," we can see how pertinent his words were. They were not to live like pagans practising immorality and licentiousness. They were not to treat their wives, their children, their slaves as did the pagans. How could they recklessly abandon themselves to the vice of paiderastia, etc. "Dullness" was a medical term and as Scott<sup>16</sup> suggests in his commentary, it is a word that suggests a paralysis or deadness to pain. The pagan vices were such in Paul's

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15. Phillips, Op. Cit. p 58-9.

16. E. F. Scott, Commentary on Ephesians, p 217.

time as to make people impervious or dead to what was right or wrong. "Not to live like pagans" has implications for our age as well as Paul's. Even though nations have come to call themselves Christian, it is agreed by all that there are many pagan vices which persist to this day. Christians have become calloused and dulled by modern society and need Paul's teaching now.

"Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil."<sup>17</sup>

Untruthfulness is one of the chief social sins.

Brotherhood is impossible in any group where there is falsehood and lying. It was impossible to have an orderly community then or even now without integrity and sincerity on the part of its members. Paul refers again to the principle already elaborated upon that "we are members one of another" and therefore must be able to rely upon one another. The social results of anger are also emphasised. Anger is a natural thing, but it can have calamitous social results when it is not kept within proper and reasonable limits. It can

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17. Ephesians 4:25-27.

have evil effects upon the individual personality as well as work havoc with the unity of a community or society.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.....let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing be put away from you with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell."<sup>18</sup>

The social implications here are tremendous. The word thief is not used. In a Christian community there should be no one who could ever be accused of being a thief, but there was even a greater social danger in those who might live as parasites on society. Everyone must give himself to some honest task that will be of service to society and mankind. No one has a right to earn a living at the expense of another. In the light of this principle then, has any one a right to manufacture and sell goods without paying a living wage? Has any one a right to build up a fortune at

the expense of another? Has any one a right to produce any article even though it yields profit, if that article when used will prove to be a detriment to human society? Not only must man work, but each one must feel the responsibility for the other's welfare. How appropriate this teaching is for modern society where there are millions who do not have work. A genuine Christian society will not only provide for the welfare of such, but will see to it that there is no breakdown of morale and disintegration of personality. "Let no corrupt speech pass from your lips." In other words, avoid the speech which might work mischief in society. As society becomes more complex and as the means of communication of news around the earth becomes almost instantaneous, the implication of this truth is more evident for world-wide observance. Conversation, too, should be edifying. It is easy to imagine how foul the talk might have been in a pagan society where the morals were so low. Plays on the stage reflect the thought and speech life of the people, and the corruption of the stage has already been noted. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing be put away from you." Here we have a collection of practices which work

havoc in society. Such things set men against each other. All such are to be dropped. Paul's counsel does not end with the negative aspect, but he moves on to the positive social virtues of love, kindness, mercy, and forgiveness. As children of God, we are to copy God, acting each in his sphere as God Himself does in the universe. "We are most like God when we walk in love -- making love the very atmosphere of our lives."

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you. Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting; but rather, giving of thanks. For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God."<sup>19</sup>

Here again we get an emphasis upon social sins which were common among the pagans. Paul touches upon one of the worst sins of all when he says to beware of "covetousness." And by covetousness is meant that attitude of life which makes one's own advantage and pleasure the sole object of life. Society is full of examples of the discord caused by selfishness and covetousness. Disaster and havoc have been caused time and time again by those who have sought personal

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19. Eph. 5:3-5.

advantage instead of losing themselves for the good of the whole. There is no place in the Kingdom of God for such.

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (expose) them."<sup>20</sup>

By living the kind of life that is pure and good, evil will be exposed.

"Be strictly careful then about the life you lead; act like sensible men, not like thoughtless; make the very most of your time, for these are evil days. So do not be senseless, but understand what is the Lord's will; and do not get drunk with wine -- that means profligacy -- but be filled with the Spirit, converse with one another in the music of psalms, in hymns, and in songs of the spiritual life, praise the Lord heartily with words and music, and render thanks to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ at all times and for all things."<sup>21</sup>

These verses are a continuation and a sort of summarising statement of Paul's counsel with emphasis upon the use of intelligence. The social value of worship is also given.

Since the verses dealing with family relationships have already been discussed as well as their social implications, we shall pass to another section of Paul's practical teaching, namely, Romans 12-14.

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20. Eph. 5:11.

21. Eph. 5:15-20. (Moffatt Translation).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."<sup>22</sup>

Sanday and Headlam<sup>23</sup> point out that the main idea of these three chapters of Romans (12-14) is one of unity and peace for the Church in all of its relationships, both internal and external. After reviewing the wonderful program of salvation as set forth in the first eleven chapters of Romans, we can make natural inferences with regard to every-day living. To begin with, the Christians were to present themselves, not as slaughtered beasts, but as a living sacrifice with bodies that were pure and free from blemish, patterned not after the mores of the pagan world, but completely transformed by the will of God. Chadwick<sup>24</sup> says that "we must note that the 'perfect' life, whether individual or social, is that life which is lived in perfect obedience to the perfect will of God. But the 'Will' of God is revealed in

22. Romans 12:1-2.

23. Sanday and Headlam, ICC Commentary on Romans, p 350-1.

24. Chadwick, The Social Teaching of St. Paul, p 121.

the Divine Law which governs the welfare of the individual and of the Society. (The moment the conception is grasped that the moral law, the physical law, the law of health, the social law, are all parts of one law -- the 'Divine Law' -- and that the revelation of each of these, in response to man's effort to discover and obey them, is a part of the one Divine Revelation, then, and only then, the true place of sociology as not only a science, but as part of the one (sacred) Science, is assured, and its infinite importance will be rightly estimated). This law is 'moral,' it is 'acceptable' -- conduct ruled by it is 'acceptable' to both God and man -- it is 'perfect' -- it is the fulfilment of the idea of social conduct. The Christian believes that Christ has revealed this law, or at least has made its revelation possible; hence the Messianic, or perfect society, learns and obeys this 'will,' or law."

Romans 12:3-21. Here we have a section that has been quoted before, and we see Paul emphasising again the necessity of intelligence, enlightenment, self-examination issuing in humility, with each individual discovering his special capacity for its fulfilment in the social organism. It is not enough



that the individual should progress, but each is to perform his duty for the benefit of the whole. If a true social life is to be maintained, then "love is to be without hypocrisy." It has been discovered in modern society that where philanthropy has been turned over to social organisations the original motives have sometimes become secondary. Social workers have "doled" out relief without any feeling of responsibility for nourishing and maintaining the family unit. Everyone of these exhortations as given by Paul is packed with social meaning and help for true living to-day as well as for the time when they were given. To summarize, "The general principles of your life should be a love which is perfectly sincere, depth of moral feeling, consideration of others, zeal, fervour, devoutness, hopefulness, fortitude under persecutions, prayerfulness, eagerness to help your fellow-Christians by sharing what you possess with them and by the ready exercise of hospitality. Bless, do not curse, your persecutors. Sympathize with others. Be united in feeling, not ambitious but modest in your aims. Be not self-opinionated or revengeful. Do nothing to offend the world. Leave vengeance to God. Good for

evil is the best requital."<sup>25</sup>

Since the teaching of Paul on the duties of the individual to the State has already been discussed,<sup>26</sup> we shall pass by the thirteenth chapter of Romans except for three verses:-

"Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law."<sup>27</sup>

Here we have again that which is central in Paul's teaching. It seems impossible that one could read the above verses and not see the social import of such teaching. Here is a principle which is to have universal application. Love is the duty of all to all. It is the solution of all difficulties which may arise in community life. No person who loves will commit the social sins of adultery, murder, and theft. Here is a practical, guiding principle which sums up all teaching which the Jews had in the Old Covenant.

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25. Sanday and Headlam, Op. Cit. p 360.

26. Page 83-102.

27. Romans 13:8-10.

No one who loves will do an injury of any kind to another by word or deed. "Love is the fulfilment of the law."

Romans 14:1-15:13. This section which has bearing on Paul's social teaching can be summarised briefly. If some of his other teaching has implications for developing the right attitude for those who are excessive and over indulgent, as we noticed in his counsel to the Corinthians, this section has a message for those who go to the other extreme and are over scrupulous. He touches some problems which may never be duplicated. There are always variations to problems, however. Paul sets forth principles for dealing with them which may have universal application for similar difficulties. There is one thing in common which the over-indulgent and the over-scrupulous have in common. They both destroy the unity of a community and the Christlike Society. As we have already seen, unity is what Paul expects and prays for. It is the ideal which he has been working for in all of the early Christian communities.

Sanday and Headlam give such a splendid summary of the social implication of this section of Paul's teaching, that the liberty of quoting it in full shall

be taken:-28

"Receive a scrupulous Christian cordially. Do not be continually condemning him. Some of you have grasped the full meaning of Christian faith, others whose conscience is too tender lay undue stress on particular practices, on rules as to food or the observance of certain days. Do not you whose faith is more robust despise such scruples; nor should they be censorious. (Verses 1-5).

"Every one should make up his own mind. These things are indifferent in themselves. Only whatever a man does he must look to Christ. In life and death we are all His, whose death and resurrection have made Him Lord of all. To Him as to no one else shall we be called upon to give account. (Verses 6-12).

"We must avoid censoriousness. But equally must we avoid placing obstacles before a fellow-Christian. I believe firmly that nothing is harmful in itself, but it becomes so to the person who considers it harmful. The obligation of love and charity is paramount. Meats are secondary things. Let us have an eye to peace and mutual help. It is not worth while for the sake of a little meat to undo God's work in a brother's soul. Far better abstain from flesh and wine altogether. (Verses 13-21).

"Keep the robust faith with which you are blest to yourself and God. To hesitate and then eat is to incur guilt; for it is not prompted by strong faith. (Verses 22, 23).

"This rule of forbearance applies to all classes of the community. The strong should bear the scruples of the weak. We should not seek our own good, but that of others; following the example of Christ as expounded to us in the Scriptures; those Scriptures which were written for our encouragement and consolation. May God,

from whom this encouragement comes, grant you all -- weak and strong, Jew and Gentile -- to be of one mind, uniting in the praise of God.  
(Verses 15:1-7).

"For Christ has received you all alike. To both Jew and Gentile He has a special mission. To the Jews to exhibit God's veracity, to the Gentiles to reveal His mercy; that Gentile unite with Jew, as Psalmist and Prophet foretold, in hymns of praise to the glory of God. May God the giver of hope send it richly upon you."  
(Verses 15:8-13).

In the remainder of this chapter, isolated passages will be recorded in order to show their significance. Most of these verses deal with problems which have already been discussed. For example, in I Corinthians 1:10, Paul is beginning his attack on the divisions and lack of unity in the Church. "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." This is a verse that still has potent meaning for to-day.

"What! do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Realm of God? Make no mistake about it; neither the immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor catamites nor sodomites nor thieves nor the lustful nor the drunken nor the abusive nor robbers will inherit the Realm of God"....."shun immorality! Any other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against the body. Do you not know your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

within you -- the Spirit you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought for a price; then glorify God with your body."<sup>29</sup>

Notice that every one of the sins listed above is a social sin, and it is impossible to have the Realm of God where such social sins exist. From a spiritual view one's own body is not his own. It belongs to God. If individuals would but realise this fact, it would affect not only their personal behaviour, but also their social outlook. If they realised the full social implication of this, they could not participate in any social sin which would harm their body.

Love has social implications. Love will always be patient and very kind. It will not show signs of jealousy; it will not be showy or put on airs, or rude, or selfish, irritable, or resentful. Love never fails.<sup>30</sup> "Let all you do be done in love."<sup>31</sup>

"For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."<sup>32</sup>

Freedom is one of the great assets of the Christian

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29. I Cor. 6:9-10, 18-20. (Moffatt's Trans.).

30. Cf. I Cor. 13. (Moffatt's Trans.).

31. I Cor. 16:14.

32. Gal. 5:13-15.

life, but it is not to be used for self-indulgence. Here again love can be a guiding factor. Freedom can be a great social danger unless it is guided by the social principle of love. The spirit of mutual love will also keep an individual from preying upon another. The whole obligation between members of a community or society can be met by treating others as they would be treated.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law."<sup>33</sup>

At least eight of these sins mentioned above are violations of the unity of individuals or society. In contrast to these social sins, the life of the spirit will issue in social virtues such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control. The life of the spirit, then, has definite social implications for living. This life is not to be lived in a vacuum but here in the midst of society.

"I pray you to give me the utter joy of knowing you are living in harmony, with the same feelings of love, with one heart and soul, never acting for private ends or from vanity, but humbly considering each other the better man, and each with an eye to the interests of others as well as his own. Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ..... In all that you do avoid grumbling and disputing, so as to be blameless and innocent, faultless children of God in a crooked and perverse generation where you shine like stars in a dark world."<sup>34</sup>

Here in Paul's letter to the Philippians the social implications of his counsel are brought out just as they are in all of his letters. He always comes to that theme eventually in his writing. He is still emphasising the necessity of unity and the social practice of humility. Christ is the supreme pattern and ideal to follow.

"...If any will not work, neither let them eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, and ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."<sup>35</sup>

Just as Paul has condemned the strong, the self-asser-

34. Phil. 2:2-5. (Moffatt's Translation).

35. II Thess. 3:10-15.



tive, and the selfish, the exploiters of the weak, so he condemns in turn the social sins of the idle and the careless. There are to be no parasites on community life. The unsocial sin of idleness must be dealt with in a strict manner. Yet this manner must be in keeping with the social practice of brotherly love.

"Be at peace among yourselves...warn them that are disorderly, comfort the weak, never lose your temper with any one; see that none of you pays back evil for evil, but always aim at what is kind to one another and to all the world."<sup>36</sup>

Here is good sound social doctrine and if practised in communities, it will produce a peaceful Christlike society.

Such, then, are some of the selected passages of Paul which reveal the social implication of his teaching. There may be some who still want to argue that Paul is too vague and general to be of much practical value. Would it be too harsh to say that such are merely begging the question or else they are mentally too lazy to apply the principles of social well-being as enunciated by Paul. The fact that Paul does not offer a "full-blown political programme" does not excuse one for ignoring his principles. As Phillips

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36. I Thess. 5:13b-15.

points out, "The Church's Master nor the Church itself has ever claimed to dictate specific schemes of social reconstruction. Its concern is to provide principles, not measures. It proclaims the ideal: and leaves men to devise the machinery by which the ideal is to be translated into fact. This, however, by no means implies that when the Church has once proclaimed the ideal, it is free from all further responsibility in the matter. Not being composed of economic experts, it does not (or ought not to) regard it as its business to prescribe the means by which the world's evils are to be cured: but it is its business to keep men's consciences alive to those evils and so to prevent their being continued through the mere vis inertiae or the interest of a powerful section. Idealism is the very breath of its life: its mission is, by showing men what might be, to make them dissatisfied with what is -- to produce a 'divine discontent.' If the public conscience is sufficiently aroused, it can usually be trusted to find its own way of grappling with an evil."<sup>37</sup>

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37. Phillips, Op. Cit. p 61-62.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

THE PASSING AND PERMANENT

IN ST. PAUL

## CONCLUSION

THE PASSING AND PERMANENT  
IN ST. PAUL

The passing and permanent elements in St. Paul have been emphasised all the way through this discourse. Therefore this chapter is more of a concluding thought than an attempt to reiterate sections of Paul's teaching already discussed.

It is surely a mistake to say with Weinel,<sup>1</sup> "That Paul's teaching is altogether cut off from national life; his ethical system is that of anarchism without and of a conventicle within.....it does not move along with the full stream of a broad life in touch with the world at every point, nor has it to do with people who either could or would acquire any influence in the shaping of society or the state." It is true that the social evils with which he deals are directly connected with a small circle of believers in the beginning but as Alexander<sup>2</sup> wisely points out, "They are the vices and virtues which for the most part have to do with men and women

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1. Weinel, St. Paul, p 334.

2. Alexander, The Ethics of St. Paul, p 112-113.

of all conditions and all times. Many of his precepts may be particular; but the principles from which they are deduced are universal and applicable to all men. Temporary and local as some of the questions may be which Paul discusses, there is nothing trivial in his treatment of them. The matter of eating meat offered to idols has no practical interest for us now, but his large-heartedness and moral earnestness, his resolute appeal to the loftiest principles, lifts the subject out of its immediate connection, and makes it an object-lesson for all times in the delicate task of adjusting the rival claims of Christian liberty and expediency.....Instead of provincial edicts he issues 'imperial laws' which are applicable to the whole moral world. He is the apostle of emancipation and liberty, fighting as the conscript of posterity the battle of spiritual freedom. His Gospel is social as well as individual. His goal is the brotherhood of man. He proclaims the unity and equality before God of Greek and Roman, of barbarian and civilised, of bond and free, and yet it is a significant fact that the spirit of a national independence has nowhere been so strong as in those nations which have received most plainly the impress of his powerful mind. It is not

too much to say that many of the great political and social questions which are so full of significance for modern times, though not directly referred to by Paul, are to be solved only in the light of and by the application of his broad principles of equality and justice, of Christian charity and forbearance, of brotherhood and unity which he lays down. His ideal for all mankind is 'till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'"3 <sup>†</sup>

As was pointed out in the introduction, we did not expect to find a complete social program or ethical system in the teaching of Paul with which to meet all the contingencies of life; but he does reveal a spiritual principle; Christ is to be formed in us; we are to receive His spirit and to make it effective in all the relationships of life. Dean Inge concludes after a lengthy discussion of Christian ethics and modern problems that, "Christian Ethics cannot be said to favour any political party, since economic questions are not primarily ethical but intellectual.

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3. Eph. 4:13. *Transfer reference to Kennen's book to this page.*

Christianity gives us no economic programme; it gives us a standard of values, which demonetises much of the world's currency, and takes most of the bitterness out of economic rivalry. Christianity condemns avarice; it condemns selfish luxury; it condemns discontent and the anxious temperament. The law of love forbids the exploitation of our neighbors, envy, hatred and jealousy. It is a simple fact that the acceptance of the Christian standard of values by the majority, even in the imperfect form in which it is already accepted and acted upon by a minority in every class of life, would quite certainly produce a far happier social life than can be found in the best ordered community to-day. It is the business of the Church to inculcate this truth in season and out of season. *Nunquam nimis dicitur quod nunquam satis discitur.* But the Christian teacher should remember that anything like violent partnership on either side will deprive his exhortations of all influence upon those whom he considers to be most in need of moral guidance."<sup>14</sup>

After a rather lengthy discussion in the chapters

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4. Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, p 250-51.

on Social Practices in the Pauline Churches and  
Selected Passages Showing the Social Implications,

it should be clear that the elements which are purely local and temporary are over-shadowed by those elements which are permanent and universal. Paul has given principles which have proved to be of value for every succeeding generation of Christians. If Paul were to speak directly to the problems of the twentieth century, he would be dealing with issues which are different in many instances, but one cannot help but believe he would approach them by the same principles which he used in the first century. He would try to solve them on the basis of Christian love and brotherhood. He would still treat all members of society as children of God. Every individual is sacred. "Christ died for all." He would still say, "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Herein lie not only the social implications of his teaching, but guidance for generations to come. With such principles as he set forth and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Christian church in every age will be able to work out its social problems. "Be ye imitators of God, as beloved children, and



walk in love, even as Christ also loved you."<sup>6</sup>

"I prefer to believe that the great principles of Jesus and Paul remain of perpetual obligation in spite of all outward changes. To do the will of God, to love one's neighbour as one's self, still remain the sum of morality. The true spirit of the Pauline ethics, 'the love of love, the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,' is the same always. But how the principle should be applied, and to what sort of conduct it should lead under various conditions, is a question which must be reserved for scientific ethics. We have a thousand ways for tracing what is the will of God, in the material world and in the world of humanity, which were not dreamed of in antiquity, or in the Middle Ages."<sup>7</sup>

One practical example of the application of Paul's teaching for this generation was discovered by the writer one evening when he was attending an "Overseas Night" programme of the 1937 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Mr. Charles Duguid, M. B., Ch. B., was speaking of missionary work in Australia. He lamented the treatment of the Australian Bushmen. They had been cheated and enslaved by the white men; but as soon as he (Mr. Duguid) had seen the implication of Paul's teaching, that "all were one in Christ," "Christ died for all," he for one could never be a part to any more mistreatment of the Australian Bushmen. Furthermore, he had ministered to them

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6. Eph. 5:1f.

7. Gardner, The Religious Experience of St. Paul, p 245.

personally and had secured legislation to protect their rights.

"There is nothing wrong with the Christianity of St. Paul, when it is rightly understood and practically realised," says Wilson, in St. Paul and Paganism. "The only road, by which alike the Church and civilisation can go with any hope of becoming all that they ought to be and might be, is to set out to rediscover St. Paul. The failure of Christianity to Christianise the whole body of human civilisation is not want of a sufficient dynamic at its disposal, but failure to appropriate that dynamic and apply it with irresistible conviction and earnestness. It is this dynamic which St. Paul offers...Alike, the modern Church and modern civilisation would do well to go to St. Paul, and to find in him the ever fresh inspiration of a spiritual life which is at once personal, genuine, and sufficient, the life in unbroken communion with the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ."<sup>8</sup>

Emil Brunner in his monumental work, The Divine Imperative, discusses the task of the Christian and the Church in the present economic system so clearly that the writer of this thesis considers it a good

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8. Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism, p 275-77.

summary and in harmony with Paul's own social teaching.

"We must fight for the new and better order.... It is the Christian's duty, in whatever economic order he may be living, to swim against the current; even if he has to fulfill his official duty in accordance with this unjust order, he must always be ready, wherever it is at all possible, to break through, and in spite of its humanity to meet his fellow man, as far as he possibly can, as man, as his brother.

"Ultimately, therefore, even within this system of Capitalism the same simple rules of Christian conduct hold good as in any of the earlier more patriarchal economic conditions; i.e., to renounce worry, and to refuse to be enslaved in spirit, not to seek our own, but that which profits our neighbour, not to assert our own rights at the expense of others, not to be covetous, or acquisitive, or greedy, not to become inhuman for the sake of things, to be ready to sacrifice our own possession for the needs of others. The commandments of the Sermon on the Mount (and we might truthfully add the principles of Paul) hold good to-day just as at all other periods in history; not as a law, but as a guide to the Divine Command; they are fixed points which show each one of us just where he is and in the line of his own possibilities, how he is to order his behaviour towards his neighbour. These commands mean exactly the same as the injunction that everyone should exercise his calling as service to his neighbour and to the glory of God, whether he be a capitalist or proletarian, manufacturer, workman, or professional man.....

"What we need is not primarily Christian programmes, but real Christian communities, in which the Spirit of God is a living power. Genuine faith, and love which arises from such faith, is the only creative and regenerating force in the sphere of economic ethics....

"In her message the Church must not only expound the Divine Command as it affects the individual, but she must also expound it for the racial and

national community and its forms of life..... From this point of view her task of proclamation is not the development of a programme, or of individual points in a programme, but the awakening of a 'social conscience,' and the awakening of the conviction that to faith nothing is impossible....

"It is her duty to show that the evils in the economic sphere come from godlessness....To lend more weight to her message, she may point out how again and again the Spirit of Jesus Christ has been the greatest force behind economic changes and transformations.

"The Church, as the community of those who believe, must also bear witness to the fact of a different spirit and a different life by her actions. 'See how those Christians love one another' -- this saying of the pagans points to the strongest missionary force, and at the same time to the strongest force of economic transformation which should and could go forth from the Church. The word of the Church will have little effect if the community of believers does not show a new life even in economic matters, a life by which the world is judged, and at the same time shaken out of its hopelessness. By the action of her members she must show that the Gospel is not only the power of eternal redemption, but also a force for earthly righteousness and humane conduct. Where she is not able to do this her faith is in a sad plight."<sup>9</sup>

In a time when the very existence of Christianity is threatened, everything depends on the existence among Christians of a deep consciousness of the all inclusive and peculiar mission of Christianity. Now is the time for the Christian Church to re-affirm, as

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9. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, p 433-39.

St. Paul did constantly, the sovereignty of the Lord  
over all of life.

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